

and pays your debt. You are out of debt. What do you do? You thank the friend who paid your debt. You can thank Jesus. He paid your debt. Every last penny piece you owed. Minted in the fire of Calvary's judgment. He produced the payment that is His rich crimson Blood. He went up to the Bar of Judgment and He took the Book where all my sins were written and He sprinkled it with His Blood, and settled the account. The old account was settled long ago, settled at the Cross.

All you have got to do is confess your sin, and Jesus says if you confess it, He will forgive you and He will cleanse you from "some unrighteousness." No! He will forgive you and He will cleanse you from "all unrighteousness."

That is how Paul preached.

### THREE: THE REASONS WHY AGRIPPA WAS ONLY ALMOST PERSUADED

Did King Agrippa get saved? No, he did not. Do you know why? *He loved sin.* That woman Bernice who is mentioned there was an evil woman. She seduced King Agrippa. History tells us that she led him down a dark path and then forsook him at the end of his days. As he looked at that woman who sat beside him, he loved his sin too much and would not come to Christ.

Tell me, what sinful habit keeps you from Jesus Christ? What binding, damning, dark sin keeps you from Christ? There is not a sin worth it, keeping you from Jesus.

Do you know what is going to happen to you if you go to hell sinner? You are going to lament for all eternity that you sold Heaven so cheap.

There are men who sell Heaven for a glass of booze. There are men who sell Heaven for a cigarette. There are men and women who sell Heaven for a dance. There are men and women who sell Heaven for a companion, or some act of uncleanness, some unholy habit. Do not be a fool, friend, tonight. You say "Preacher, if I could get rid of this sin I would get rid of it." I know a place where you can get rid of it tonight. I know a power that can break its chains and set you free. That place is Calvary. That power is the Blood of the Lamb.

If you love sin too much, you are going to be only almost a Christian.

Secondly, Agrippa did not want to be laughed at. You see old Festus laughed at Paul and said, "Paul, you are mad." King Agrippa did not like the laugh of Festus.

Men and women will not get saved because they are scared of the sneers of their companions. They are afraid that their mates will laugh at them. If you went out tomorrow morning and said "I was at the Town Hall and heard Paisley preach, and I got saved." You can hear the laugh of your mates. The devil says "Now do not be a fool, you will be laughed at tomorrow. They will make a mock of you." I tell you, if you get saved tonight you would not care what anybody said to you. You know if you were saved tonight, if you were really saved you would not care if they crucified you tomorrow, as long as you had Jesus in your heart. You would be glad to take the reproach for Jesus' sake.

I led a man to the Lord. I cannot tell the story of how he was led to the Lord. I might tell it some other night. He was a young man. He is now in the Glory Land. He met with a tragic accident about three years ago, and was cut off trying to save two other men. He sacrificed his own life.

That young man worked among a group of bad evil men. You know the day he went into his work and told them he was saved, they said to him, "You are still going to read the filthy books." He said, "I will never read them, I will never look at them again." They put him on the ground and two of them sat on his legs, and two of them sat on his body, and two of them sat on his arms, and they got all these filthy books they used to look at with filthy pictures, and they said, "We will make you look at them." He closed his eyes, and the six of them fought with him but they never got his eyes opened. I said, "Stanley, when you were lying there, what were you thinking?" He said, "I was blessing God that I could suffer something for the Man Who suffered so much for me."

I tell you if you get Jesus you will go through anything. When I went to prison the first time I wept all night, not with sorrow but with joy, that I was counted worthy to suffer a little shame for Jesus' Sake.

Are you afraid of being laughed at? Is that why you are not saved?

*Finally, Agrippa loved his position.* He would not give up the throne. He did not want to stand with the prisoner. He wanted to remain in the palace. He would not give up the world.

One day a man was standing at the rail of a boat. The boat was moving out to sea. The man had something in his hand and he threw it up and caught it. It gleamed in the sunshine. A passenger went over and said, "What is that?" He replied, "That is my life savings and it is a beautiful diamond. I have sold all that I had to possess this diamond." The man that was travelling with him said, "Are you not a bit of a fool, throwing it up? If the vessel sways you could lose it." "Not at all," he retorted, "I have been doing it for hours." He threw it up again and it gleamed in the sunshine. Then he threw it up very high, and at that moment the boat lurched away. He cried out and shot forth his hand over the ship's rail, as far as he could, but the beautiful diamond just tipped his finger and fell into the water. He screamed out: "Lost! Lost! Lost!"

You say "Preacher, I do not believe that story is true." I want to tell you, that story is true. That man is you. The most precious thing you have is your soul, and you are playing with it like the man playing with the diamond. You *are* playing with your soul. Hear me, you can play with it once too often. The ship of time someday without warning will lurch, and your soul will be lost in the dark sea of eternity. God forbid that would be true of you.

Come and trust the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Saviour. May it be so, for Jesus' Sake!

AMEN AND AMEN.

I led a man to the Lord. I cannot tell the story of how he was led to the Lord. I might tell it some other night. He was a young man. He is now in the Glory Land. He met with a tragic accident about three years ago, and was cut off trying to save two other men. He sacrificed his own life.

That young man worked among a group of bad evil men. You know the day he went into his work and told them he was saved, they said to him, "You are still going to read the filthy books." He said, "I will never read them, I will never look at them again." They put him on the ground and two of them sat on his legs, and two of them sat on his body, and two of them sat on his arms, and they got all these filthy books they used to look at with filthy pictures, and they said, "We will make you look at them." He closed his eyes, and the six of them fought with him but they never got his eyes opened. I said, "Stanley, when you were lying there, what were you thinking?" He said, "I was blessing God that I could suffer something for the Man Who suffered so much for me."

I tell you if you get Jesus you will go through anything. When I went to prison the first time I wept all night, not with sorrow but with joy, that I was counted worthy to suffer a little shame for Jesus' Sake.

Are you afraid of being laughed at? Is that why you are not saved?

Finally, Agrippa loved his position. He would not give up the throne. He did not want to stand with the prisoner. He wanted to remain in the palace. He would not give up the world.

One day a man was standing at the rail of a boat. The boat was moving out to sea. The man had something in his hand and he threw it up and caught it. It gleamed in the sunshine. A passenger went over and said, "What is that?" He replied, "That is my life savings and it is a beautiful diamond. I have sold all that I had to possess this diamond." The man that was travelling with him said, "Are you not a bit of a fool, throwing it up? If the vessel sways you could lose it." "Not at all," he retorted, "I have been doing it for hours." He threw it up again and it gleamed in the sunshine. Then he threw it up very high, and at that moment the boat lurched away. He cried out and shot forth his hand over the ship's rail, as far as he could, but the beautiful diamond just tipped his finger and fell into the water. He screamed out: "Lost! Lost! Lost!"

You say "Preacher, I do not believe that story is true." I want to tell you, that story is true. That man is you. The most precious thing you have is your soul, and you are playing with it like the man playing with the diamond. You *are* playing with your soul. Hear me, you can play with it once too often. The ship of time someday without warning will lurch, and your soul will be lost in the dark sea of eternity. God forbid that would be true of you.

Come and trust the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Saviour. May it be so, for Jesus' Sake!

AMEN AND AMEN.

SERMON:

**FELIX'S FORTUNE, FEAR  
AND FOLLY**

# FELIX'S FORTUNE, FEAR AND FOLLY

*"Felix trembled"* Acts 24:25.

The Apostle Paul was always at the preaching. Dragged before the Jewish Sanhedrin, he turned the bar to a pulpit and cried out "As touching the resurrection of the dead, I am called in question this day."

Summoned before King Agrippa he again preaches the Word and gives his personal testimony to Christ and Christ's Truth. He does it with such power that the King leans forward in his royal robes upon his royal throne and says, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

Here in this passage which I have read to you, Paul is again on trial, on trial before Felix the Roman governor.

This is a most interesting chapter. It unfolds a most interesting drama. There are three great characters on the stage.

*First of all there is Felix the Roman governor.* Felix was once a slave. The emperor Claudius, passing a slave market in Rome one day, saw a fine, well built young slave. He took a liking to him. He told his master to cut the chains. He set him free. He took him to his royal palace. He showered upon him his royal bounty. He educated him and elevated him and made him a Roman governor. There is Felix, once a slave boy, now a Roman governor.

*Beside him there sits a woman, her name is Drusilla.* She is a Jewess and is not his proper wife. She was

married to one of the kings of Arabia. She was a daughter of that evil man Herod the Great. She forsook her legal husband. She entered into a form of marriage with Felix and lived in an immoral relationship with this tall, dark, much honoured Roman governor.

*Then on the other side of the stage is the old rugged warrior of the cross.* I tell you I like Paul. There is one thing I want to do when I get to Heaven, after I have seen my Lord, had my first blow on the golden trumpets, my first pull of the strings of the harp and seen my loved ones, I want to meet old Paul. I like him! I am telling you there was not one bit of compromise about Paul. He had a back as straight as a ramrod. You could not bend him or break him. There he is. He has been scarred, battered, persecuted, and imprisoned. He has been in nakedness and in hunger for the gospel's sake. But the fire is still in his soul.

God gave us fire in our souls. It is all right being on fire when there is a touch of revival in the meeting. It is easy to shout Hallelujah when the old boat is really floating and the waves are coming in but it is not so easy to be on fire when everything and everybody is dead wood round you. It is much more difficult to be on fire then.

Paul was always on fire. There he stands and Felix says to him, "All right Paul, let us hear a sermon. I hear you are a great orator. I hear you have travelled the world. I hear you can sway the audiences of the world. You have swayed them at Mars Hill. You have swayed them at Athens. You have preached across Asia Minor. You have evangelised in Cyprus. Come on Paul, let us have a test of your oratory."

Paul started to preach but it was not the sermon Felix thought he was going to preach.

You know I like this man Paul. He preached just the very thing his congregation did not want to hear. That is the right way to preach. You know, you young preachers that are here, if as a preacher you know that there is someone in the congregation playing around with some sin, and doing something which is evil, I tell you what to do, charge both barrels of the gospel gun, lay your sight on that old sinner, pull both triggers at the same time and let him have the gospel hot-shot as hard as you can give it to him. That is the way you preach.

Luther said, "I am at the big sinners in the back seats."

Let me say this to you, Paul really preached. He meant business. There are three things in our text. *First of all you have Felix's Fortune*. Oh yes, he was a fortunate man. He listened. That is the greatest fortune you ever had. You have the privilege of listening to the gospel. You could not measure the wealth of that privilege, to be able to listen to the gospel of Christ. It was a miracle that hard-living, evil, wicked, sinful, Felix should have the fortune of being able to listen to the preaching of the gospel. I want to talk a little about Felix's fortune. He listened.

*Then secondly, you have Felix's Fear*. He trembled. It was an old-time gospel meeting he was in! He did not sit like a lump of putty in the pew. He really trembled. He really felt the power of God as old Paul preached the gospel. He trembled.

That was good preaching! God help me to preach so that sinners will tremble.

Please God sir, you will tremble tonight. You will see a yawning hell beneath your feet. You will see the darkness of the doomed, ruined, damned souls in the dungeon of despair. God make men tremble! Make them tremble as the Word is preached!

*Last of all you have Felix's folly, procrastination*. He put it off. He said, "Not tonight Paul, some other night. Some convenient day I will call for thee."

So we are going to talk about Felix's Fortune, *he listened*. Felix's Fear, *he trembled*, Felix's folly, *he procrastinated*.

#### ONE: FELIX'S FORTUNE

*First of all, he listened.*

Now history tells us that Felix was an evil man. He exercised his authority at the point of the sword. He committed more atrocities as governor for Rome than any other governor before him or after him. He was a man given to bribes. You will notice how he sent for Paul, and thought that money would be given to him. He was an evil living man. I have told you he was living in adultery with Drusilla. He was an immoral man. He was an unclean man, a fornicator and a drunkard.

What do you preach to a man like that? You see Paul knew what to preach to him. He did not say "Now, be careful, I better take my time and be diplomatic, and not go too hard against things, because I hear old Felix does not rule properly. He is not a righteous man, he is a wicked man."

*Paul preached first of all about righteousness, that is what he preached.*

He set about stating the standards of God.

Do you know what Ulster needs? It needs a race of prophets who will preach righteousness. You know I fear today that our morality is almost gone. I fear today that men's words are not their bond. We have a terrible tragedy today, unrighteousness in the pulpit, unrighteousness in the pew, unrighteousness in the Parliament, unrighteousness in the business, unrighteousness in personal relationships and in personal covenants. There are not many men of truth today. Alas, truth is fallen in the streets and equity cannot enter.

Paul started to preach righteousness. He started to preach up that which was right.

This man Felix was a drunkard and a fornicator. Paul preached temperance. I am telling you Paul was a gospel preacher. He was not sparing this old governor. He was not saying "I better be careful, he might take my head off." He said "Well as long as my head is on I will let him have it. If he takes it off I will be faithful to God and go to Heaven."

That is the sort of preaching we need, is it not? Paul set about denouncing the king's intemperance, exposing his fornication, his uncleanness, his immorality, his adultery and his drunkenness.

When a man sets about preaching the Word of God in the power of the Holy Ghost, he really exposes sin.

My sinner friend, your sin needs to be exposed. I do not know what your particular sin is, I do not know what vile habit has forged the chains and bound and imprisoned your soul. I tell you, men and women to-

night in this hall, God demands righteousness and God demands temperance.

*Then Paul spoke to Felix of judgment to come.* He says "Felix, you will not always be in the place of power. You will not always be in the judge's chair. You will not always pass the verdicts and either send the prisoner to his doom or release him and let him free. There is a day coming when there is judgment to come. It is going to be reversed Felix. You will stand at the Bar, and God will sit on the Throne. You will not do the talking, God will do the talking. You will not do the commanding. God will do the commanding. You will not pass the verdict, God will pass the verdict." Judgment to come!

Sinner, hear me in God's Name tonight, there is judgment to come. There is a day coming when every one of us will stand before God. What a day that will be! That will be a day of terrible exposure will it not? The hidden things will come to light then. The buried things will be resurrected then. Things locked away in the cupboard of memory will come out of the cupboard that day. What an exposure it is going to be, when all your sins march before the judgment seat and pointing their finger at you and cry out in unison, "Guilty! Guilty! Guilty!" What a day that will be.

I am glad that not one sin will point its finger at me. I am glad not one sin will have a resurrection as far as I am concerned. I am glad that not one sin will jump out of the cupboard at me on that day. My sins are under the Blood of Christ, Hallelujah! It is great to be saved.

Is it not a great thing to know that your sins are forgiven?

It is good to know that God has forgiven them. But there is something better than that. God has forgotten them. He says "Your sins and your iniquities I will remember no more forever." Hallelujah! I am glad of that. They are gone. The old devil could not find them if he tried. They are behind God's back and He never looks round. They are in the sea of God's forgetfulness. My God has an unfailing memory, but there is one thing which He does not remember and that is the sin which is washed away in His Son's Blood.

It is a great thing to be saved. I would rather be saved than have all the riches which the world could give. I would rather be saved than have all the pleasures the world could offer. I would rather be saved than to have all the positions which the world can offer. Happy is the man who can say, "My sins are forgiven. Praise God, I have been born again."

You can be born again tonight. Maybe you have no intention of getting saved, but you can be saved tonight. Paul had no intention of getting saved riding to Damascus, but before he reached the city he was saved. God did it, and He can do it in your heart tonight.

*The second thing I want to tell you is this, Felix not only heard this great message but he sat under God's power.*

You have heard the message of the gospel like Felix, many times friend. It is not the first time the claims of Christ have been pressed upon you. It is not the first time the preacher has urged you to get saved, to get right with God. You have forgotten the first time you heard the gospel. You could not count the number of gospel opportunities God has freely given to you. In

some of those gospel meetings you sat under God's power.

That day a strange power came down on the governor's palace, the power of the Holy Ghost.

May the power of the Holy Ghost come down on the Town Hall here tonight. That is what I am praying every day, that God will send His blessed, gracious Spirit down upon these meetings, for I believe friend that all the preaching is in vain except it has the anointing of the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven.

Christians come and pray that the Spirit will come upon the people who gather to hear the Word of God. If the Spirit of God comes there will be revival. We will not need to preach. People will be saved before we start the sermon.

There was an old preacher, and he did not believe in the 1859 Revival. He was one of those unbelievers. There are a whole lot of unbelieving preachers, yes! He said, "I am going to preach against the Revival." So he announced that he would preach against the Revival. He got up, the lazy old rascal, late on a Sunday morning. He got dressed and went down the road. He saw a great crowd of people going to the church. He stuck out his chest and said to himself "I am going to have a great meeting today, a great crowd today. I am going to clean up this Revival." When he arrived at the church gates that is all the far he got. The graveyard was packed. The church was packed and one of the Revival converts was in the pulpit giving his testimony. As he gave his testimony, people were falling down all over the church and all over the graveyard getting saved. The old preacher never got to the pulpit that day. He never got

through the gate. The work was going on. God was working with power.

God can do the same again. Come on Christian, let us pray that the power of God will come down.

Oh, my sinner friend, I know there is no argument which I can bring, no strong words in my vocabulary which will move your soul. If the Holy Ghost gets the hold of you, you will be moved. I am praying that God will get a grip on you tonight, that you will stop the fooling, the shamming, the nonsense, and playing around and going to hell and that you will start thinking about getting right with God, getting your sins cleansed and getting ready for the great eternity. May God do it in your life, for only He can do it.

## TWO: FELIX'S FEARS

*Now let us look at his fears.*

Oh, he trembled, he trembled. I can see him sitting there and at first there is a sort of smile or sneer on his face. Then I see, as the old apostle takes the sword and plunges it into his soul and probes the depths of the cancer of Felix's sin. Felix losing that sneer and smile. I see concern written on the governor's countenance. I see the red ruddy cheeks of the licentious governor grow pale with terror. I see his hands holding onto the arms of the chair. I see his knees knocking together. I see and hear the sob of the sinner under the power of God's Word. As Paul preached, he trembled.

Maybe there is someone here tonight and you have had that experience. As Heaven and hell have been preached in plain language, you have trembled. You

know that in order to gain Heaven you must quit your sin. You cannot have your sin in Heaven. You cannot have the world and Christ. You cannot have unrighteousness and the Saviour.

Old John Bunyan said, "I found out that sin and me could not walk the road to Heaven. That I had to walk that road without my sin."

You have learned that truth and you have trembled, have you not? It is not the first time you have trembled.

You know that although Felix trembled, he is in hell. He never got saved. He trembled, but his trembling was not the trembling of salvation but the trembling of condemnation.

You can come to the meeting. You can have your heart moved and your soul stirred. You can feel the strivings of God upon you, and you can taste the Spirit of God and conviction of sin and not be born again. "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." There is a striving of the Holy Spirit that does not lead to salvation, it leads to condemnation. Is that what you have had? You have trembled but you are not saved.

Is there some man in this meeting, and away back long ago in life's memory you can remember the day, in that little service where you heard the gospel, and you trembled sir? Do you remember that day when the Spirit of God really moved in your heart, and ah, you should have been saved but you said "No"? You walked away from Christ, and God, and Heaven and peace. You are not saved yet!

We opened a new church in the city of Armagh recently. I had a gospel mission in that church. (My

father was a preacher in Armagh, in his first pastorate as a young man).

I was preaching in our new church, and there was an old man weary with years, sitting about three seats from the front of the church. As I preached, that old man started to weep. As I preached on, his whole aged being really trembled. When I made the appeal, he was first to his feet to come down the aisle and to take Jesus as his Saviour. After he had been led to Christ he came and talked to me as I was sitting in the pulpit of the church. He said, "Mr. Paisley, I would like to tell you something. Your father, as a young man, held his first gospel mission." I said, "I will tell you where he held it, it was in Keady Orange Hall." He said, "That is right. I was just a boy. I was only fourteen years of age. Your dad rode his bicycle from Armagh to Keady. He came to our home for he knew us. He got the hold of me and he made a bargain with me that I would open the Orange Hall, light the lamps and light the fire every night." He continued, "I lit the lamps and I lit the fire for your dad during that mission."

There was something like one hundred people saved during that mission. There was a great move of the Spirit of God! He said, "I sat through that whole mission and I was moved, and convicted and I trembled, but never got saved." And there he was, seventy-five years of age, from fourteen to seventy-five without Christ. Oh, bless God, God gave Him another chance. Through the old preacher's son he found the Saviour. As I looked at that man I said to myself, "You might have missed Christ. You might have missed Heaven for evermore." How strange the workings of God.

Men and women tonight, it is not enough to tremble, it is not enough to be concerned, it is not enough to weep.

I was holding an all-night of prayer in our old church. You know we had trouble with the neighbours when I first went to the Ravenhill Road, because when we started praying we started to shout. The neighbours used to come down and kick up a row and say, "You are disturbing us, we want to sleep." I used to say "You do not need to sleep, you need to waken up and get saved." They did not like it.

One night we were all praying, and we heard a knock on the window of the room. I went out and there was a prominent man standing there. I said "What do you want?" He said, "I want to come in." I said, "You are welcome." He came in and sat down on a form at the back of the old church. (A small form which held three people). He started to weep and he wept so hard that there was a pool of water at his feet.

He looked at me and he said, "Do you know this, my mother was a Christian like you. She prayed for me from my earliest days." He said to me, "I grew up and got a love for the whiskey bottle, and now I am tied hand and foot." He sat there, he cried and he trembled. We got round him and we prayed for him, but he got up and said, "It is no good. I love the bottle too much." He staggered out. I made enquiries about him the other day, and I am told he is still drinking away as bad as ever. He sat in the all-night of prayer and wept, but he is still on the road to hell.

It is not enough to tremble. You have got to come to Christ. You have got to make contact with Jesus. The

match will not light until it makes the contact with the emery board on the match box. My friend, there will be no light struck on your soul until you make contact with Jesus. May you make that contact tonight!

### THREE: FELIX'S FOLLY

The last thing which I want to speak about is his folly. He procrastinated. Do you not see him when he says, "Paul I have heard you. Some more convenient time. Go away Paul. Pronounce the benediction. Close the meeting. Dismiss the congregation. Paul some other day, some more convenient season, some time when I feel more able to come I will come to Christ."

He procrastinated. Business called him. The affairs of State called him. The work of Caesar's Empire called him. The voice of Drusilla lured him down the road to hell. Poor Felix, torn between the siren voice of the world, the lureing voice of Drusilla, and the trumpet voice of his imperial master, he shut out the voice of God forever.

Could I take you to the doors of the great Eternity? Could I put the everlasting key into the eternal lock and open those great doors? Could I swing them back tonight so that you and I could stand on the edge of a lost sinner's hell? I hear a cry down there in the depths of the fire and in the depths of the brimstone. Whose voice is that? Whose cry is that? Whose tears are those? Whose sobs are those? They are the tears, the cries of Felix. He is still crying, "Some more convenient day I will call for you." It never came friend, and he lost his soul!

Am I looking into someone's eyes tonight, and it is their last opportunity? Am I gazing into someone's face tonight, and it is their last opportunity? Time for them has run out. The convenient day has come and gone, and, alas, they have not made it.

Friend, make it tonight. Make sure you are in Christ. Run away to that Hill called Calvary. Wash in the Bloodstream which flows from the Cross. Hide in the wounds of Jesus. Friend, tonight, seek the Lord while He may be found and call upon Him while He is near.

May you not be like Felix, but may you be like Paul. Not almost a Christian but altogether a Christian.

AMEN AND AMEN!

SERMON:

**THE GOSPEL  
ACCORDING TO JOHN  
THE BAPTIST**

# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN THE BAPTIST

A Sermon preached by Dr. Ian R. K. Paisley in Martyrs Memorial Free Presbyterian Church, and broadcast by the BBC Radio Ulster on Lord's Day, 30th May, 1976.

*"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."* — John 1:29.

The Gospel preacher's business is to uplift the Lord Jesus Christ. What man may think of the preacher is completely unimportant. He is only a voice, what he says, not what he is, is all important (he is only a signpost); not what he looks like (a signpost may only be a piece of knotty splintered wood), but where he points to is what really matters.

John was no miracle worker. The late Rev. W. P. Nicholson preached a sermon which he called "The Ungifted Worker" on the text "John did no miracle." The text does not finish there, however, listen, "but all John spake of this man was true."

My text is full, full of gospel truth, full of saving grace and full of life-giving power. We will start at the end of that verse. Firstly, "the sin of the world," that's the enormity of man's guilt. Secondly, "the Lamb of

God," the mystery of God's love. Thirdly, "that taketh away," that's the activity of God's Son. Fourthly, "behold," that's the simplicity of our salvation.

## I. THE ENORMITY OF MAN'S GUILT

*"The sin of the world"*

"The sin of the world." What a topic to discuss! — what a subject to expound!

Notice carefully, it is not the sins of the world, but the sin of the world; not sins, acts of sin, but sin itself in its totality, character and nature. To know something of sin we must first look at—

### ITS CHARACTER

The Shorter Catechism gives a tremendous definition of sin: "Sin is any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God."

That is really just an explanation of the word used in the Greek New Testament which is translated sin. It means, "missing the mark," failing to reach God's standards or, on the other hand, going beyond God's boundaries into forbidden territory.

*Sin is Lawlessness.* It is lawlessness against the Holy God. The law of God, like the God who gave it, is absolutely holy. What are you? You are a rebel, a lawless one in rebellion against the holy God of heaven.

*Sin is Rebellion* against the all-powerful God. Know ye not against Whom ye strive, the One Who inhabitest eternity, the One who holds the four winds in His fist,

the One who metest out the heavens as a mere span. Did ever any strive with such an One and prosper.

*Sin is Blasphemy* against the True God. Hear these solemn words from eternity: "He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record God gave of His Son." I John 5:10.

This is the sin that lies in all our hearts. It has stained our lives; it has stained our hearts; it has stained our actions; it has stained our relationships and, if not forgiven, it will put such a stain on our souls that we will be damned forever.

Secondly, we must look at—

#### ITS HISTORY

We are starting at Eden's garden. God made man holy but sin came in and turned that holy man into an unholy creature. Through sin man, instead of remaining the friend of God became the fiend of Satan. Sin ruled and reigned in Adam's heart. Yes, and the first man ever born by natural generation into this world was Cain and he became a murderer. Sin was working, wasn't it? Yes, and you can go on with its history — turn over six chapters in the Bible and sin which started to corrupt a family has now corrupted the whole earth. "All flesh had corrupted itself before God."

Oh, the dark, damnable, depraving history of sin.

Sin, it will rob you of life.

Sin, it will rob you of Jesus.

Sin, it will rob you of heaven's home.

Sin, it will damn you immeasurably deep in hell forever. Don't play with it, don't trifl with it, don't fool with it.

Thirdly, we must look at —

#### ITS IMMENSITY

Not a creature ever born naturally is exempt from adding to this dreadful mountain of sin.

There's not a nation which doesn't work for its enlargement. There is not a creed that is not stained with it; nor a family that is not scarred with it; nor a man or woman exempt from it. Think for a moment of the sins of but one day, add to these the sins of one week, and yet again to these the sins of one month, one year, aye, one lifetime. What a mountain is now formed. Pile them up, sinner: the sins of hands; the sins of head; the sins of heart, the sins of eye; the sins of ear; the sins of body; the sins of feet; the sins of soul; the sins of babyhood, childhood, youth, manhood and old age. What a hideous, hellish, heinous multitude, add now to them the sins of this generation and of all past generations, and of all future generations, and you will get some glimpse of the immensity of sin.

#### II. THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S LOVE

##### *"The Lamb of God"*

Over against the awful hideous story of man's sin I can present the wondrous story of the mystery of God's love.

#### MAN CANNOT TAKE AWAY SIN

Man has religious creeds which promise freedom from sin. They are doomed to failure; they cannot produce a

truly pardoned soul. Did you ever meet a man whom his fellow man freed from sin? Never!

#### ANGELS CANNOT TAKE AWAY SIN

Tell me, could the angels free us from sin? The angels are powerless in this matter. The greatest angel God ever created was defeated by sin. He was called Lucifer, "the son of the morning." Sin ruined him; created pure as the mid-noon of heaven, sin cast him down to hell. Angelic strength cannot battle with sins.

#### THE LAMB OF GOD CAN TAKE AWAY SIN

Is there someone who could save man from sin? Away in the hills of glory before the hills of our universe were laid; away out on the untrodden tracks of a past eternity, there was One able to save men from sin: God's Son, the Lamb of God. What a title that is, "The Lamb of God!"

God revealed this in the twilight of the Old Testament. The prophetic scriptures revealed that men, sinful men, need a lamb.

We stand at Eden's gate. Two men, two brothers, Cain and Abel, have erected altars there. They have left their sacrifices on the altar tops. They need to be reconciled to God. Because of sin they are at enmity with Jehovah. They require "at-one-ment," ATONEMENT.

Cain offers a sacrifice of works. There is no atonement. God refuses his offering. Cain is not reconciled to Jehovah. Abel offers the blood of a lamb, there is atonement. God accepts his offering. Abel is reconciled to

Jehovah. Learn from this type. The Blood of the Lamb of God on the altar makes atonement for the sinner.

What you need, sinner, is the Blood of Atonement. What will take the frown from the face of an angry Deity? What will sheath the glittering sword of judgment. What shall transform the throne of judgment to a throne of mercy? — THE BLOOD OF ATONEMENT.

When the deluge of Noah's day had passed, Noah offered a lamb amongst his other sacrifices. When God saw the sacrifice He said, "I will not again curse the ground." Wrath was past, assurance was Noah's, the BLOOD of the Lamb of God IS THE BLOOD OF ASSURANCE.

You can be absolutely sure of salvation.

Look further at the Old Testament types. Down in Egypt the judgment angel is hovering over the land. The blood of the Passover lamb is sprinkled on the door post and lintels of the houses of the Israelites. When God sees the blood the first born is acceptable and no judgment can touch him. What makes the sinner acceptable? It is the BLOOD of the Lamb.

This is exactly what I, a poor law-condemned, heaven-condemned, heart-condemned sinner needs: ATONEMENT, ASSURANCE, ACCEPTANCE, and the Lamb of God imparts them all.

Who gave this Lamb? God gave Him.

A world filled with rebels, a planet scarred by sin, generations lawless against the most high and shaking their fists in the face of a thrice holy God. What does God do? He loved the world, He looked on His Son, His wondrous Son, and He made Him the sacrificial Lamb.

See the mystery of God's love, the Lamb of God. Now we come to — *The MEANS OF GOD'S ATONEMENT*

### III. THE ACTIVITY OF GOD'S SON "Taketh away"

How did the Lamb of God take away sin?

#### FIRSTLY, HE BOWED HIMSELF TO WHERE IT WAS.

From the heights of everlasting glory to the depths of awful shame, my Saviour bowed Himself. He stooped to where sin was. The eternal Son whom created eyes had never seen was robed in the rags of our mortality and appeared upon this scene of time. He came to where sin was.

#### SECONDLY, HE BORE IT IN HIS BODY

What did Christ take a body for? In order that it might be a vehicle upon which God might place our sins. The devil hates the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. He hates it because it was the battle ground in which our Lord conquered sin and death and men. Without taking nature Jesus could not atone for sin. So Satan attacks the precious body of our precious Lord.

The Lord permitted His body to be handled with evil hands. Why? Because He took our sin on His body and so He must endure all the shame of sin. Sin scars; Christ was scarred in Pilate's judgment hall. Sin strips you; Christ was stripped stark naked at Calvary. Sin plunges you into the depths of shame; Christ was plunged into the depths of shame on Golgotha's hill-crag. After His death no unholy hands ever handled the body of my Lord. God said, "So far, but no farther." When the atonement was made, it was the holy hands of a believing

Joseph and Nicodemus took that precious body down from the tree. It was the holy hands of the women that clasped the feet of the risen Lord. It was to the disciples that He said, "Handle me and see." I'm glad they'll never abuse His body again. Why? Because on His body He bore away my sin forever.

#### THIRDLY, HE BLED FOR THEM AT CALVARY

The price was demanded by justice and He paid in the invaluable coin of His precious blood. Every debt in the book of judgment against His people He settled; every charge He atoned for.

#### FOURTHLY, HE BREAKS THEIR POWER IN OUR LIVES

*Christ breaks the power of cancelled sin.*

*He sets the prisoner free.*

*His blood can make ten thousand clean,*

*His blood avails for me.*

I must finish with a brief word on:—

#### IV. THE SIMPLICITY OF OUR SALVATION "Behold"

Here's the way of salvation — "Behold." I will say but three things about this word "Behold."

#### FIRST, IT IS A WORD OF EXPLANATION

It explains the way of salvation. John didn't want any of his hearers to think that his baptism took away sin. He said that his work would soon be done. He would decrease, for after him was coming One Who was preferred before him for He was before him. Then he cried,

behold the Lamb of God. That is the only way of salvation. When you really behold a person you have got to get your eyes off every other person and every other thing. That is the way one is saved by grace. You've been looking at the church, you've been looking at yourself, you've been looking at other people. Get your eyes off yourself; just look to Jesus. Behold Him. Look and live.

#### SECOND, IT IS A WORD OF INVITATION

C. H. Spurgeon, the greatest of English preachers, as a young boy found Christ through the simple invitation to look. He says himself:—

"At last, one snowy day, I found an obscure street and turned down a court and there was a little chapel. I wanted to go somewhere, but I did not know the place. It was the Primitive Methodist's chapel. I had heard of these people from many, and how they sang so loudly that they made people's heads ache; but that did not matter. I wanted to know how I might be saved, and if they made my head ache I did not care. So sitting down, the service went on, but no minister came. At last a very thin looking man came into the pulpit and opened his Bible and read these words, 'Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.' Just setting his eyes on me as if he knew my heart, he said, 'Young man, you are in trouble.' Well, I was sure enough. Says he, 'You will never get out of it unless you look to Christ.' And then lifting up his hands he cried out, as only I think a Primitive Methodist could do, 'Look, look, look. It is only look,' said he. I saw at once the way of salvation. O, how I did leap for joy at that moment. O,

I looked until I could almost have looked my eyes away, and in heaven I will look on still in my joy unutterable."

#### THIRD, IT IS A WORD OF EXHORTATION

Yes, I must exhort you to look to Christ. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so the Son of Man must be lifted up. You remember the history of it don't you. The bitten Israelites were just to look and live. The Israelites who did not look perished. Yes, and if you don't look to Christ you'll perish in hell forever. Can't you see Moses exhorting the bitten ones to look. Can't you hear some doubter arguing with him, "What's the use of looking," he exclaims. "Don't argue," the prophet replies, "Just look."

Friend, don't argue about Jesus. Don't bring up all the time worn questions of the devil. Just look and you'll live. Do it now. Just where you are, whoever you are, in God's Name, sinner, look and live.

Listen to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereto: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." — Matthew chapter 7, verses 13 and 14.

*Happy if with my latest breath  
I may but speak Christ's Name,  
Preach Him in life and cry in death,  
"Behold — Behold the Lamb."*

AMEN AND AMEN.

SERMON:  
WHAT THINK YE OF  
CHRIST?

# WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

"What think ye of Christ" Matt. 22:42

I served my apprenticeship in preaching in the open air. I had a great tutor. My tutor in open-air preaching was a man that had been saved from the very depths of sin and from the dark dungeons of evil habit and polluting vice. His name was Teddy Sherwood. Once he was the champion welterweight boxer of Southern England. He had his prize gold belt always at the gospel meetings. He used to swing that great gold belt, which he won as the welterweight for the South of England, around his head and shout as only Ted Sherwood could shout. He had a voice like a trumpet. People had to heed and listen to him. When he got tired and husky, he used to say, "Go on Ian, you have a go." So he drew the crowd, and so I served my apprenticeship, preaching when his voice was gone, his throat husky and his powerful frame exhausted.

I remember very well, one Lord's Day afternoon during the war on Barry Island in South Wales. There was a tremendous gathering of sevicemen and women at the amusements in that great amusement centre. I remember Teddy taking his gold belt and swinging it round his head as hard as he could, and shouting for the crowd to come. They gathered in their hundreds to hear that man preach. He threw down the belt, pulled off his coat, and rolled up his sleeves. When Teddy preached,

you would have thought he was back in the boxing ring. I used to say "Teddy, you are taking on the devil." He used to reply, "Hallelujah! brother, I will give him a cauliflower ear tonight." He would set about preaching like an old boxer would set about boxing in the ring.

After he had finished preaching one evening he said "Ian, come on, get into the ring." I was only a stripling lad of sixteen. I stood there with a Bible in my hand. As best as I could I followed that great open-air preacher. The crowd stayed, and a young woman started to heckle me. Of course, in those days I was a foolish young man. I thought that I could talk a woman down. I have more sense now. I know you could not talk any woman down. I talked on, and the crowd cried out, "Come on and answer her question. Come on, answer her question." I stopped and I said, "What is your question?" She said "How do you know there is a Jesus Christ? How do you know there is a Jesus Christ?" And oh, a great shout of derision went up from the ungodly in that crowd.

Here was I, a mere stripling with little experience, faced with a hostile crowd. I sent a prayer to Heaven. I said, "Lord, give me an answer. Turn this weapon as a boomerang in the face of the devil." God gave me the answer. I said, "Young woman, I come from Ireland, and an Irishman always answers a question by asking another. I will answer your question, if you will answer me a question?" "What is your question?" she replied. I said, "Could you tell me what day it is?" The crowd laughed. She said, "It is Sunday." I said, "Could you tell me what month it is?" She said, "It is the month of August." I said, "Now I have only one more question.

Could you tell me what *year* it is?" The crowd saw what I was getting at now. They started to laugh and sneer at her. She said, "It is nineteen hundred and forty-two." I cried. "Where did you get that from? Nineteen hundred and forty-two years from where?" She mumbled and stuttered. I said, "I will help you out. It is A.D., it is the year of our Lord, after the death of Christ. There is a Christ and young woman, when you take your Diary out and look at the year, that number stands as a living testimony that there is a Christ."

Oh, friend, the best established fact in history is the Person of Jesus Christ. Let me talk about that Person tonight. Who would deny the Person of Jesus? Only a fool would shut his eyes to the reality of Christ. Christ divides men. Christ divides people. Christ divides history. Jesus Christ!

#### ONE — THE GREAT QUESTION

"What think ye of Christ?" Jesus said.

I want to ask that question of every man and every woman in the meeting tonight. Come on friend, it has nothing to do with the Church. The Church is not mentioned, not even suggested. There is not even the faintest reference or inference about the Church. It has nothing to do with the Church. Let it be a Reformed church or a Roman church. Let it be an orthodox church or a heterodox church. Let it be a Trinitarian church or a Unitarian church. Let it be a Bible-believing church or an apostate church. (There are many of those today). I tell you friend, it has to do with Christ.

It does not say, "What think ye of baptism?" There is not a word about sprinkling here. There is not a word,

my friend, about the sacrament of baptism here. It is not saying, "What think ye of baptism?" No sir! It is saying, "What think ye of Christ?"

There is not a word about the Lord's Table here. Not a word about eating and drinking at the Table of the Lord. Not a word about doing this in remembrance of Him. It is not there by inference. It is not there by the faintest reference.

This text brings us to the very heart of the gospel, to the very centre of the gospel. This text brings us to the very foundation of the gospel. "No other foundation can any man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

"What think ye of Christ?" It does not say "What think ye of the preacher?" You might not like the preacher but if the preacher tells you about Jesus, you should get your eye on Christ.

In this town of Ballymena I have more friends than ever I had before. There was a woman here the other Lord's Day, and when she got saved she exclaimed, "I never liked Mr. Paisley. I hated him. I detested him. I was against him. I heard the gospel and I knew I needed to be saved. I could not get quick enough to Christ."

Hallelujah! for the power of the gospel! Not a word in this text about the preacher.

There is not a word about the singer. There is nothing here about him either. I was telling him he must have had a good breakfast of bird seed this morning. He was singing so well. I wish somebody would give me some of that bird seed.

Let me tell you friend, it has nothing to do with the preacher. It has nothing to do with the singer. It has

nothing to do with the Church. It has nothing to do with baptism. It has nothing to do with God's work and God's service. It has all to do with Jesus.

My friend, oh that we could get the message over. Would to God we could sound it across the headlines of the Press. Would to God we could sound it over the waves of the radio. Would to God we could put it on every television screen.

It is Christ who matters. "What think ye of Christ?"

### THINKING ABOUT JESUS

*Men have thought many things about the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Some of you have not thought very much of Him. If you had you would have been saved years ago. No, you did not think much of Him.

Although He left Heaven for you. Although one day He said good-bye to the snow white angels, He said good-bye to a Throne of solid gold. He said good-bye to the bosom and love of His Father. He said good-bye to singing which is celestial and songs which are eternal. He said good-bye to it all and came down out of the ivory palaces into this world of woe. Only His great eternal love made my Saviour go.

When He came, men did not hail Him. Men did not crown Him. They did not give Him His proper place. The first sentence we read about Him is a sentence like this, "There was no room for them at the inn." There was no room ever for Jesus. One day He was forced to exclaim, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His

head." He left the Throne for the shame and rejection and repudiation of men. He left the songs of angels to become the song of the drunkard. In the wine shops in Jerusalem they sang His Name in drunken mockery. This Jesus of Nazareth. "What think ye of Christ?" ye winebibbers of Jerusalem. They sing His song in a sneer, the jibe of Hell is the language of their music.

### CALVARY

*He went one day to Calvary.* Oh, that I could picture that awful scene. When that ribald crowd cry, "Crucify Him, crucify Him," in the morning air.

I hear the march of the group of Roman soldiers as they march "left, right; left right," beside the Christ of God. They lay a wooden cross, a tree upon His back. He is carrying such a weight of sin, He can carry no more. They compelled Simon the Cyrenian to carry it before Him. And they come to that place somewhat ascending, to that hill crag just outside the old city wall of Jerusalem. They lay that tree, that stake down upon the ground. I hear the sound of the hammer swung low, they are nailing my Lord to the tree. I can see His Body quiver as the nails pierce His hands. Oh, as that iron strikes iron, the blood and the flesh are pushed inward by that sharp spike. What agony He suffers in His sinless flesh.

You know, sin coarsens men's physical resistance. Sin enables men to be hard in their flesh. But Christ was Sinless. His nerves were perfect. His flesh was absolutely sensitive. Every pain was ten times stronger in His sinless Body than it would have been in your sinful flesh.

They have already crowned Him with thorns. Every thorn jags into His brain, and His brain is set on fire with the torments of the judgment of Almighty God. Having spiked His hands and feet, they heave that tree up and the weight of His Body hangs upon the nails which hold His flesh. There is a ripping and a tearing and a gushing out of Blood. I hear the dull thud as the butt of the cross enters the ragged ravine, the crevice of the rock. They hammer down the stones, and stand back to behold their shameful handiwork.

*"What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?"* What do you think about Him? You have not thought very much about Him. Sure you have not? That cross has been meaningless to you. You have turned your back on Him. How many times have you rejected Him? You could not add them up. You could not enumerate them. They stagger you tonight as you sit in this hall. You have rejected Him night after night, week after week, month after month, year after year, decade after decade. You have said, "No," to Jesus. *"What think ye of Christ?"* You have not thought much about Him.

We see Him hang there. Soon every bone is out of joint. Soon His tongue cleaves to the roof of His mouth. Soon the agonies of God are upon Him. Soon the black blanket of darkness surrounds Him. Soon, from the middle of that darkness, there is a cry, and what a cry it is, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

What do you think about it? You have not thought very much of Him. Sure you have not?

He died, and, praise God, in dying spoke my name.

*"Was it for me, for me alone,  
The Saviour left His Glorious Throne?"*

The dazzling splendour of the sky,  
Was it for me He came to die?

Was it for me He wept and prayed?  
My load of sin upon Him laid,  
That night within Gethsemane  
Was it for me, that agony?

Was it for me, He bowed His head  
Upon that cross and freely shed  
His Precious Blood, that crimson tide,  
Was it for me, my Saviour died?"

Thank God I can say tonight, "It was for me!" It was for Ian Paisley He endured the cross, despised the shame, bore the pangs and endured the agony. It was for me!

You too, can say it if you will, "It was for me!"  
"Why was He there as the bearer of the sin,  
If on Jesus my guilt was not laid?  
Oh, why from His side, flowed the  
sin-cleansing Blood, if by dying, my  
debt was not paid?"

## TWO — CALLING THE WITNESSES

*"What think ye of Christ?"*

I tell you what I want to do tonight. I want the Lord Jesus to stand here on trial before you, the lowly, crucified, bleeding Saviour. I am going to empanel this congregation as a jury. You are going to bring in a verdict on Jesus Christ. The question is, "What think ye of

Christ?" In the Name of God Almighty I would empanel everyone of you to bring in a verdict on the Son of God, the Blessed Saviour.

I am going to call witnesses. I am going to call the enemies of Jesus. I am going to call the friends of Jesus. When you have heard the witnesses then you will give your verdict. You will answer the question, "What think ye of Christ?"

### THE ENEMIES OF JESUS

Who were the great enemies of Jesus? Let us call them first of all, the enemies of the Son of God. *The clerics, the religious leaders, the high priests of Christ's day, the Pharisees.* Let us bring these Pharisees, these men with unrelenting antagonism and hatred for Christ in their hearts. Let us hear what they say of Jesus.

I bring the Pharisees tonight, and I say, "Proud Pharisee, thou that professest to sit in Moses' seat, thou that professest to know the law, thou that professest to understand the scriptures, tell me, proud pharisee, what think ye of Christ?" What does the pharisee say? He says, "This man receiveth sinners. This man receiveth sinners." Proud Pharisee, must thou reject this man because He receives sinners? The Pharisee, in his folly says, "Yes, you must reject Him." Why? "Because He receiveth sinners."

Oh, thank God for that testimony concerning Christ. We would not have had a hope. We would not have had a place in the economy of God, in the plan, the programme, the purpose of the Eternal, except He receiveth sinners. He receiveth sinful men. Praise God, He does

receive sinners. He receives them in the arms of His love and in the embrace of His divine forgiveness.

I say to the proud Pharisee, "Stand down."

We call now the chief of the religious leaders. *Caiaphas the high priest.* We see the dignified and bearded priest of Israel take his stand in the witness box. We say, "Caiaphas, successor of Aaron, the high priest of God, "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?"

Caiaphas says, "It is expedient that one man should die for the nation." "And should we reject this Christ, high priest Caiaphas, because He is going to die for the nation?" The high priest says, "Yes, reject Him as I reject Him."

I stand back to ponder that witness's words, "It is expedient that one man die for the nation, and not the whole nation perish." Praise God, that is a great testimony to the Substitution of Christ. That is exactly what He did. He took the place for the nation of His people, and His people, today, go free. For He died that we might live forever.

Let me call another enemy. *Let me call the Roman governor Pilate.* The man who presided at the last judgment of the Saviour. There He stands, a proud, arrogant representative of the Imperial Caesar. I say, "Governor Pilate, you have met this Jesus of Nazareth. What think ye of Christ?" Three times, (If you read John's gospel, it is recorded there, three is the number of completion in scripture and so it is a perfect testimony) he says, amazing words from a judge who condemns the prisoner at the bar "I find no fault in Him." No fault in Jesus. Hallelujah!

I tell you, when you are saved you will not find any fault in Jesus. He is the sweet Rose of Sharon. He is the fair Lily of the Valley. He is the Bright and Morning Star. He is the Chieftest among ten thousand. He is all my fancy pictured in its fairest dream and more each day He grows still sweeter than He was the day before: No fault in Jesus.

You say, "Preacher, these witnesses are witnessing not against Him but for Him." Truly for there is not a devil in hell, an angel in heaven, a sinner in hell or on the face of the earth who can bring anything against Jesus. There is no fault in the Son of God.

Now I will bring the man who sold Him for thirty pieces of silver. *We bring that wretch, that devil possessed being, Iscariot himself.* There he stands and casts the money, the thirty pieces on the marble floor of the temple pavement. I say, "Judas, hold a minute." He cries out, "I am going to hang myself." I say "Judas, hold a minute. What think ye of Christ, before you go?" He looks at me and he cries with a cry of wretchedness, "I have betrayed innocent Blood." He is the innocent Son of God. "What think ye of Christ, Judas?" "He is innocent."

I go out to the Cross and I accost that brutal Roman soldier who commanded his underlings to nail Jesus to the Cross, and spike Him to the tree. I say, "Centurion, what think ye of Christ?" He views that Cross, as the Saviour dies, and he exclaims, "Truly this was the Son of God."

But before he could offer that testimony, *the dying thief had said "This man hath done nothing amiss."*

Sinners, enemies, vile man, apostate clerics and they cannot bring anything against Jesus.

I go to the door of hell. I summon up the demons from the pit. I say to them "What think ye of Christ?" They cry out, "Torment us not, Thou Holy One of God." The very black minions of the pit say He is the Holy One of God.

"What think ye of Christ?" Come on, are you bringing in your verdict now. What are you thinking about Him?

#### THE FRIENDS OF JESUS

Let me bring the friends of Jesus. The first man I bring, and I like this man, (if I ever was in a tight place I would like this man by my side), the old rugged John the Baptist. (There are not many baptists like him today. We could do with a few more). Man, there he is, bold John. He has got a rough camel coat and a leathern girdle. He has been waiting in the camps of Israel for the moving of God. He has not been brought up on the dainty fare of the king's palace. His menu is locusts and wild honey. I say, "John, tell me, what think ye of Christ?" With extended hand, with a voice that cannot be imitated, and a tone that has in it the ringing bells of the glad song of redemption, he says, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." What a testimony! The Lamb of God. The Sacrificed Lamb. Oh, the Bleeding Lamb, oh, the Bleeding Lamb, oh, the Bleeding Lamb, He was found worthy. To take the Book, to loose the seal, to bruise the head that bruised His heel. Oh, the Bleeding Lamb, He was found worthy.

*I say to Peter.* "Peter, tell me, what do you think of Christ? You once denied Him, Peter. You once cursed Him with oaths and vile blasphemous language. You once stood and trembled when a little girl challenged you and called you a friend of Jesus." Peter, with tears in his eyes and a lump in his throat, but with everlasting joy springing within his breast, cries out, "There is none other Name under heaven, given among men, whereby ye must be saved."

*Shall I bring the four evangelists.* "Matthew, what do you think of Christ?" He says, "He is the Sovereign." I say, "Mark, what do you think of Christ?" He says, "He is the Servant." I say, "Luke, what do you think of Christ?" He says, "He is the Saviour." I say to John, "What think ye of Christ?" John replies, "He is the Son." The Sovereign, the Servant, the Saviour and the Son of God! That is what the four evangelists, who wrote the gospels thought of Jesus.

I come to another man, a man who is so much like ourselves. (I have no time for those who criticise the characters of the Word of God, and count themselves a little better than the men and women of the Book. These men and women are perfect portrayals of ourselves). Who is this man? He is an unbelieving believer. And there are many unbelieving believers. *He is Thomas Didymus.* I say, "Thomas, what do you think of Christ?" He looks up into the eyes of Jesus. He looks at His nail-pierced hands and nail-scarred feet and says, "My Lord, my Lord and my God!" My Lord and my God!

Happy is the man who can say that tonight. I can say it here as a personal testimony. That is what I think of Jesus. My Lord and my God. Thank God, we can say it

without any reservation. Thank God, we can say it before devils and men. Thank God, we can say it before the Donald Sopers of this world, that Jesus is my Lord. Hallelujah! and He is my God.

I summon from Heaven, the bright celestial inhabitants of the sky. I call Gabriel and Michael the archangels, I summon those heavenly visitants who came down from heaven to earth on many prophetic occasions. I say, "What think ye of Christ?" And they shout in radiant majesty, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour (Hallelujah! that is what you and I need) Who is Christ the Lord."

With holy reverence I climb the ladders of the sky. I enter the door of the sanctuary of the Triune Jehovah God. With bowed head and reverent step I take my position at the Throne of God the Father. I whisper in holy awe, and I say, "Oh, God the Father, Everlasting Triune God, what think ye of Christ?" With that voice, which is the voice of eternity, and with that authority which is the authority of Deity, the reply is given, "This is My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him."

### THREE — NOW PRONOUNCE YOUR VERDICT

You are the jury tonight. Christ has been on trial in the Ballymena Town Hall. I have called the witnesses. But before I close this Book, I want to give you a word of personal testimony.

"Suffer a sinner whose heart overflows  
Loving his Saviour, to tell what he knows,  
Boasting excluded, pride I abase,  
I am only a sinner saved by grace."

As I passed up Mount Street tonight, and I cast my eye over to Hill Street Baptist Church, I thought of a second pew on the right hand side as you go in at the doorway. I thought of a little boy kneeling many years ago at the second pew. That little boy was me. I found Jesus at that pew, that memorable day. I found the pearl of greatest price. I found the greatest Friend that a boy could find. I found God in Christ. I found pardon. I found peace. I found glorious liberty. I found it in Jesus Christ. I tell you, I have let Him down many a time. I have failed Him on many occasions. He has never failed me. I have got His promise, and some day I will be with Him forever. What a day that will be. Sweeping through the gates of the new Jerusalem, singing washed in the Blood of the Lamb. I will sing as well as Willie McCrea then. He will be asking me to sing solos then! What a song. All about Jesus!

Oh, I commend my Saviour to you. No words of mine could commend my Blessed Saviour. Ten thousand charms around Him shine, but best of all, I know He is mine.

...

Make Him yours tonight. Do not take another step along life's road until you know Jesus. Do not go out of this meeting to the darkness of a Christ rejecter's night, a Christ rejecter's death, a Christ rejecter's coffin, a Christ rejecter's grave and a Christ rejecter's hell.

Friend, tonight, come and a thousand welcomes to Jesus. Come to Him. Come as you are. Come with your sin. Come with your habits. Come with your failures. In God's Name I command you just to come. If you come He will receive you. He will forgive you. He will pardon

you and He will baptise you with power and you will go out to live for all eternity.

May you pass the right verdict. May you make the right decision.

"What think ye of Christ?" You are going to register your answer now.

**AMEN AND AMEN!**

SERMON:  
THE CREED OF THE  
DYING THIEF

# THE CREED OF THE DYING THIEF

*"Verily I say unto thee, Today thou shalt be with me in paradise"* Luke 23:43.

Turn to Luke's Gospel chapter twenty-three and verse forty, "But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."

I have a very plain subject and I want as simply as I can to make the gospel clear as possible to men and women. I want to talk upon The Creed of the Dying Thief.

We live in a day when foolish men tell us it does not matter what we believe. All that matters is how we behave. The emphasis is upon behaviour and not upon belief. The emphasis is upon works and not upon faith.

I want to tell you something, the behaviour of a person is based upon his beliefs. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. If he believes something, he will practise that. If he does not believe it, he will not practise it.

The preface to the Westminster Confession of Faith emphasises this: "Belief is all important. For what a man believes, that will he speak, and how he speaks,

that will lead on to how he acts. Belief is of fundamental basic importance."

Of course people tell us you can be saved and believe practically nothing. I do not accept that. I believe there are certain things which men believe in order to be saved. I believe there are great fundamental doctrines which are essential to saving faith in Christ. I believe that the foundation of the gospel is not in the sinking sands of an easy beliefism. It is on the firm solid impregnable rock of belief and truth.

There are five things which that dying thief truly believed. (Now I am not going to preach upon the five points of Calvinism, I could preach a sermon on that!)

## FIRST — THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

Do you know what he believed in? Listen to it. He is hanging on the cross. I want you to look at this man. He is a malefactor. His hands are nailed. His feet are nailed. He is covered with sweat, and blood, and shame and guilt and the first thing he says is this, "Dost not thou fear God?"

The first fundamental belief, in order to saving faith, is the Sovereignty of Almighty God. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and that is where salvation starts. I have been praying that God will put His holy fear upon the people.

## A HOLY REVERENCE FOR HIS NAME ...

I was thinking today of what the fear of God consists of. The first thing the fear of God consists of, is a holy reverence for His Name.

Oh, we live in a day when the Name of the Lord is

blasphemed. We live in a day when the Name of the Lord is treated with contempt. We live in a day when the Name of the Lord is treated as the subject of some hideous blasphemy, some vicious, vile, unholy joke. I am praying that God will put His fear down upon the people, and, what will happen? They will start to reverence His Name. The Name of the Lord will become something characterised by holiness and solemn awe.

Oh, what a day, that day was, in this town of Ballymena when the 1859 Revival came. The preachers said that upon this town came the holy awe of a Holy God. Men who were careless, indifferent and sinful, vile, and full of sin, suddenly were stopped on their tracks to hell, and had a vision of the Holy God. Yes and they had a vision of their unholy selves. The fear of God became the beginning of wisdom. God do it again!

May God put His fear sinner upon you, that you will repent bitterly that you have ever scorned that Holy Name. May you get such a conviction of sin about your taking that Holy Precious Name on our profane lips, that you will cry in this meeting, a piercing cry from your heart, "God forgive me, that I took your Holy Name in vain." The fear of God is reverence for His Name.

#### SUBMISSION TO HIS WILL

The fear of God is submission to His will.

Now you have not been submissive to His will. You have been breaking His commandments have you not?

Do you know the ten commandments were written on two tables of stone. Four commandments on one table, set out the Godward relationships of men. They are four-fold. Thou shalt have no other gods before Him. You

will not go into a pagan form of worship. You will worship God only. You will not take His Name in vain and you will remember and sanctify His Holy Day. That is the first table of the law. And I tell you sinners, you have not submitted to that table. You have other gods in your life, have you not? You have gods of sin, gods of worldliness, gods of lust, gods of sinful habits, gods of illicit relationships. Maybe you have been caught up with the gambling fever. Maybe you have lived an unclean, immoral life. Some of you have revelled in the reading of vile literature and polluted your soul and put a shadow on your conscience, the dark shadow of the midnight of hell.

Men and women, you would need to submit yourself to God's law. Aye, you have profaned His Name, have you not?

A man got saved here the other night. The next day he went into his work and he said to his boss, "I got saved last night, you will never hear me curse again. I have repented of my swearing and my blasphemy." Man, that is how God saves men. When He saves them He deals with the very sin which prevails in their life.

You have taken His Name in vain and you have turned His Holy Day into a holiday. This land of Ulster could not have any blessing upon it until it keeps holy God's Day. Those public representatives who stand for the sanctity of God's Day, God bless them! God bless them! May we back them to the hilt. The *Belfast Telegraph* will write little editorials about them, but thank God for men that love His Day. I love God's Day!

If I had been seen cleaning my shoes on the Sabbath, my father would have laid a rod to my backside. I

would never have felt like cleaning my shoes ever again on God's Day. I believe in keeping holy the Lord's Day.

You have played around, have you not on God's Day? You have not kept it holy. Your relationship to God!

#### RELATIONSHIPS TO YOUR FELLOWS

What about your relationships to men. What about the other six commandments, on the second table of the law? You have not loved your neighbour as yourself. You have done the things that you should not have done, and you have left undone the things that you should have done. You have not feared God, because you did not fear His law.

I am praying that God will so impress His law on men's hearts that they will fear Him.

We have a lot of posters up round Ulster, "Thou shalt not kill." A man saw one of those posters and that finger pointed at him. He was a man who condoned murder. He said to a friend of mine, "I saw that finger pointing at me all night. I could not get away from it." He said "I got right with God in the morning."

May God put that fear over this Province. I believe in the power of the Word of God.

We want no effervescent revival. We want a genuine God-wrought revival. We want men and women really saved. If they are a bunch of Paisley converts in this campaign they will be back in the world in no time. But if God saves them, they will stand forever, and they will be shouting the praises of Jesus in a million years from

tonight. That is what we want, and we can have it if you Christians will pray the fear of God on sinners.

What a great thing it would be if we came into this hall some night and we did not need to preach. All we would see would be men and women on their knees asking God to save them. In the '59 Revival one of the preachers tells us he had people getting saved in every room of his house. I would love that. Would that not be great? People in every room of your house coming to the Saviour. To hear the shouts of new born babes, mingled with the tears of convicted sinners. We will have it when the fear of God comes down.

I am praying sir, that you who have come into this meeting a careless, hard-living, hard-drinking sinner, that God will put His fear upon you. You have to meet a Holy God some day. Life is not forever sir! There is a shroud for you. There is a coffin for you. There is a grave for you. You will meet God some day. You dare not meet Him now. You know rightly you could not meet Him. There would be confusion of face, terror of soul and damnation forever. But, Hallelujah! you can get saved tonight. You can have all your sins forgiven.

When God forgives you He forgets about it. There are some people who say, "I forgive you but I will remember it. I will remember what you said and did." When God forgives, He wipes them all out, every one of your sins. I will never answer for a sin ever committed, Jesus answered for them all on the cross. He paid the price of our redemption.

Brother Gordon Cooke was singing for us the other night. Usually when he sings in the open-air, the rain comes on! He sang here inside the hall the other night

and we had showers of blessing. He was singing "Glorious freedom." That is what God does for you. He sets you free. The Sovereignty of God!

I declare in this hall with arms upraised to Heaven, I believe in the Sovereignty of Almighty God. I have absolute confidence that when God breathes, men will be saved, and nothing will hinder them. Should every devil in hell kick. Should every emissary of hell reel. Should every power of hell be unloosed. Jesus is stronger than Satan and sin, and Satan to Jesus must bow. He has got to go down. When the Lord comes, the devil has got to go, Hallelujah! Now we believe in the Sovereignty of Almighty God, and so did that dying thief, he was a Free Presbyterian! He believed in the Sovereignty of Almighty God.

#### SECOND — THE SINFULNESS OF MAN'S ESTATE.

I will tell you what else he believed in. He believed in the sinfulness of man's estate. He said "We indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds." The sinfulness of man's estate. He did not try to clean himself up. He didn't say, "I am not just as bad as anyone else." He had to realise that he was a lost, guilty sinner. He believed in the sinfulness of man's estate. "We indeed justly; for we received the due reward of our deeds."

If God gave me the due reward of my deeds, He would send me to hell. I am a sinner. There is nothing good about me. From the sole of the foot to the crown of the head there is no soundness in man, but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores.

You look mighty nice tonight. You have got your beautiful hat on madam. You have got your handbag with you. You look very well. You were at the mirror tonight and you filled in all the wee cracks, and got them puttied up nicely and got the powder on, and you feel quite nice. You said to your husband, "Do I not look well?" If he had not said, "Yes, dear," he was for it. He said, "Yes" and you came to the meeting.

If you are not saved, it does not matter how nice you are, how honourable you are, how decent you are, how upright you are, how well baptised and how well churched you are, you are a lost soul. As God looks down upon you, He sees you as an old cancer heap of sin. Shot through with sin.

You say "Preacher, I do not like that. I do not mind you preaching to the drunkards, the gamblers, the hard living and the hard blaspheming sinners of Ballymena, but do not say that about me. I teach in Sabbath School, I am a church elder. I am on the church committee. I sit at the Lord's Table on Sacrament Sunday. I am a pillar of the church." My friend, let me tell you in God's Name, Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Dr. R. A. Torrey tells in one of his books, how that a lady waited behind one night, after one of his services. He knew when he looked at her that he would have a long hard job to deal with her. So he dealt with everybody else including the hard old sinners. When he had dealt with them all he went over with his Bible to this lady who was very well-dressed and very polite. She said, "Dr. Torrey, I don't think my religious experience is satisfactory." He said, "Madam, I don't think

you have any religious experience at all." She said, "How dare you say that? I am a church member. I would have you to know that." Dr. Torrey opened his Bible at John chapter three and said, "Let us look at it. 'Except a person be a church member, she cannot see the kingdom of God.' It does not say that. It says, 'Except a man be born again.'" She said, "Well, I am more than a church member. I take communion." He said, "Let us look at it again. 'Except a person takes communion, she cannot see the kingdom of God.' No it does not say that." She said, "Well, I sing in the choir." He said, "We will look at it again. 'Except a person sings in the choir, she cannot see the kingdom of God.' It does not say that either. You need to be born again." She said, "Well, I will tell you, I am even better than that. I am the Superintendent of the Sunday School." He said, "Let us look at it again. 'Except a person be the Superintendent of the Sunday School, she cannot see the kingdom of God.' It does not say that." Then she looked at him and she said "Dr. Torrey, I am even better than that. My husband is the minister." He said, "Let us look at it again. 'Except you marry the minister, you cannot see the kingdom of God.'" He said, "Woman, let me tell you, you are a poor, lost sinner. You need God's salvation. You need a vision of your sin."

Do not be fooling tonight. Do not be hedging. Do not be trying to get away from it. Face up to it. There is only one thing that gets men to Heaven and that is a genuine new birth. You will not feel you have need of that, until God shows you your lost condition, the sinfulness of man's estate. You are a sinner tonight. You

are a poor lost sinner. That is the second thing the dying thief believed.

### THIRD — THE SINLESSNESS OF JESUS

The third thing he believed in was the sinlessness of Jesus. I love that. Listen to this testimony. "This man hath done nothing amiss." What a testimony. When a poor sinner, a criminal on the scaffold, the dying thief hanging on a blood-stained cross, turns his eyes to the man on the middle tree and he sees that this man hath done nothing amiss.

There is one person I want to meet in Heaven more than anybody else, and it is this dying thief. Do you know why? Not a voice was raised in defence of Jesus at the cross, but his. I love this man. While the soldiers were gambling for Christ's garments, when the disciples stood afar off, while men had turned their backs on Jesus, there was a poor sinner and he made a great testimony. Oh, what a word is this, "this man hath done nothing amiss."

If Jesus had done anything amiss, He could not have been our Saviour. He did no sin, bless His lovely Name. He knew no sin, bless His Holy Name. In Him is no sin, bless His thrice Holy Name. He is the Sinless, Crimeless, Harmless, Spotless Son of God. Because He is, He can save sinners. If there was one speck of sin in Him, He could not save us.

He is Pure. He is Holy. He is Harmless. He is the Wonderful Jesus. I tell you men and women, I love Him with all my heart. I love this Blessed Man of Calvary, Wonderful Man of Calvary Who died to set me free.

Blest Man of Calvary. What a Saviour He is. The Spotless, Holy Son of God. It is no wonder, when men come around deriding Him, I raise my voice in His defence. What sort of a man would I be, when people come around and say things about Jesus, if I did not raise my voice in His defence. For this man hath done nothing amiss. I believe in the Sinlessness of Jesus.

"Man of Sorrows, what a Name  
For the Son of God Who came,  
Ruined sinners to reclaim,  
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!"

Guilty, vile and helpless we,  
Spotless Son of God is He,  
Full atonement can it be,  
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!"

The dying thief believed in the Sovereignty of God, the Sinfulness of Man's estate and the Sinlessness of God's Son.

#### FOUR — SUBSTITUTION OF THE SAVIOUR

Ah, he believed something more. We are coming to the heart of it now. He believed in the Substitution of the Saviour.

Do you know what he said? "We are in the same condemnation. He is sinless, we are sinful, but we are both condemned."

Let me show you something. At the cross there was a man and there was sin in him and sin on him. On the

other side of the cross there is a man and there is sin in him, but praise God, there is no sin on him. He is trusting in Jesus. On the middle tree there is a Man and what a Man, the Godman, and there is no sin in Him, but praise God, my sins are on Him.

"Why was He there as the bearer of sin  
If on Jesus my guilt was not laid?  
Oh, why from His side flowed the sin-cleansing  
Blood,  
If by dying my debt was not paid?"

Was it for me He bowed His head  
On that cross and freely shed  
His Precious Blood, that crimson tide,  
Was it for me, my Saviour died?

It was for me, yes all for me,  
O, Love of God, so great so free,  
O, Wondrous Love I'll shout and sing,  
He died for me, my Lord and King."

I am glad He died for Ian Paisley. It rejoices my heart that He died for me.

After the first great war, there was a hospital near the south coast of England where the most badly wounded soldiers who fought in the Flanders field were brought home to finish their days. One day the Prince of Wales came to that hospital, the man who was to be King Edward the Eighth and later to abdicate the throne. He had a conducted tour around the hospital. He saw men who had lost their eyes, and some who had

lost some of their limbs. He sat with them a while and then he rose up and he went to the Matron and said, "Are these the worst cases?" The man who was with him said, "Your Royal Highness, these are the cases you have to see." He said, "I am the king's son, I will see what I want, stand back." He said, "Matron, are these your worst cases?" She replied, "No, your Royal Highness, these are the best cases in the hospital." Then she took him through ward after ward where men very severely maimed and battered were. After he had passed through all the wards, he said, "Matron, is that all?" "No, she said, we have one man but we do not let anybody see him." He said, "I am the king's son, I am going to see that man." She took him into a room and upon the bed there was a stump lying. His legs and arms were gone, his eyes were gone, part of his head was gone and he was lying there just a stump upon the bed. The story goes that the Duke of Windsor went over to that bed and he knelt down beside that bed, and he put one of his arms round that stump and he raised his face to the ceiling of the ward, and with tears streaming down his face he said, "Man, you did it for me. Man you did it for me, you did it for me."

I want to take you to the cross tonight. I want to show you a Man Who was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men. I want to show you the bleeding head, the thorn-crowned Christ. I want to show you a Body which was battered, and broken, and bleeding, and tortured and sacrificed. "Behold and see if there is any sorrow like unto my sorrow," cries the Son of God in the agony of Calvary's passion. I want you to bow at that cross and say, "Thank God, you did

it for me, you did it for me." Kneeling there at Calvary's cross, redemption will be complete.

The Substitution of Christ!

## FIVE — SALVATION TO THE UTTERMOST

The Sovereignty of God. The Sinlessness of Man's estate. The Sinlessness of Jesus. The Substitution of Christ. But he believed in something more, he believed in salvation to the uttermost.

This poor sinner cried, he said, "Lord, remember me, when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom." Salvation to the uttermost.

When coming to this meeting tonight I passed the first home that in my boyish memory I can remember. I was pointing out to my escort the first bedroom that I remembered waking up in. I was reminding myself that, as a little boy, I had a picture over my bed and I was very proud of that picture. It was a picture of old General William Booth, with his long silver beard and hair, in his Salvation Army uniform. Underneath the picture were the words, "Salvation to the uttermost." As a young boy I used to stand and look at that old man and I used to say as I knelt down at night, "Lord, help me some day to preach salvation to the uttermost." That is what I am preaching tonight. God heard my boyish cry. I have been preaching it round the world. I have preached it across Ulster, across Canada, across the United States and across the United Kingdom and it works. God saves to the uttermost. I have seen on my own road, the Ravenhill Road, the strongest sinners saved by sovereign grace.

Half the congregation today do not know half the stories behind many of their fellow members. They are sitting among them. They do not know the stories behind their conversions but I know them. I know the men who come into our church every Sunday morning. The congregation now would not know them. But when I went to the Ravenhill Road some of them were the worst drunkards on the road. One man drunk until his business was gone and all was lost. I remember the night when he found salvation to the uttermost. The Lord saved him. This gospel is a practical message.

That dying thief, he could not work, his hands were nailed. He could not walk, his feet were nailed. He could not get baptised. He could not take communion. He could not join the church. But praise God, he could look. That is how he was saved. He looked. Who did he look to? He looked to Jesus. That is the way you are saved!

Look, man, to Christ. When you look to Jesus, you have got to look away from everything else. You have got to look away from the church. You have got to look away from other Christians. You have got to look away from the preacher. You have got to look away from your own beliefs and follies. You have got to look away from your sins and your habits. You have got to look away from tomorrow with all its temptations and its sinful companions. Look to Jesus!

If you look to Jesus you will live forever. The bonds, the sin and the chains will go with one touch of the nail-pierced hand of Jesus. Will you look to Him tonight?

The other thief did not look. The other thief refused to see that Fountain in his day and there may you, as vile as he, throw your last chance away.

Are you going to throw away your last chance tonight, and go down the steps of this hall out into the night of a lost eternity or are you going to come to my Saviour? Come, for all things are now ready.

AMEN AND AMEN!

—  
—  
—

SERMON:

AFTER THIS THE  
JUDGMENT

## AFTER THIS THE JUDGMENT

*"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."* Heb. 9:27.

I have a very solemn and a very heart-searching subject tonight. I would not be faithful to you if I did not talk to you with great plainness of speech, about the two great appointments which you and I are ordained to keep. If Jesus Christ does not come, every one of us are going to die.

You are a dying man, Sir. You are a dying woman, Madam. We live in a dying world. Death is stamped on our bodies. Death is stamped upon our physical being. We cannot escape it. "We must needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground." That word is God's truth. You cannot deny it. You cannot dodge the column and get away from it. You have an appointment with death. I have got to talk about it.

There is something more. You have not only an appointment with death, but you have an appointment at the judgment bar.

An old soldier lay dying and he started to cry out. His companion of many a stricken battlefield, was by his side and he said, "Willie, do not be crying out, you

have faced death many a time and you have faced it without a tremor, and you have faced it without a cry." The man from the death-bed said, "John, it is not death I am afraid of, it is what comes after, which scares me to the depth of my soul."

After death there is judgment. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

In this meeting there are children in their innocence. There are young people in all the buoyancy of their youth. There are older people in all the strength of maturity. There are people that are older still. They have been up the incline of life and they are going down into the decline of life. They are stamped with frailty.

Sometimes when we see a great congregation, when we stand in the busy thoroughfare and we watch the crowds go passing by, we are apt to ask, "Can anything sweep away all this life? Children in their innocence, young people in their buoyancy, older people in their maturity and aged people in their frailty. What will wipe them all out?"

O, friend, there is something which will wipe us all out. Old reaper Death. Old man Death with the scythe in his hand. He is cutting the sward and every stroke of that old scythe of his is bringing down to the grave our friends, our neighbours, our companions, and our loved ones.

One day that old man Death with his scythe will cut us down and we will lie cold upon the ground in the sward of mortality. Some day Ian Paisley will die. Some day Willie McCrea will die. Some day James Beggs will die. We cannot escape it. We cannot get

away from it. It has been appointed by God Almighty. God said to Adam, "the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Remember that word "surely die." Adam sinned and Adam died and every son and daughter of Adam and Eve ever since are all doomed for death. You are going to die. You cannot escape it.

Of course, you do not want to think about the shroud. You do not want to think about the coffin. You do not want to think about the grave. Of course you don't. Neither do I! It is not a pleasant thing to think about. It is not a subject that preachers who love the Lord want to preach about. God knows we need to preach about it. Oh, as we go through life, everybody is thinking of living, nobody is thinking about dying. Everybody is thinking that they are here forever. They forget that some day, sometime, somewhere, the sands of time will run out, the curtain will fall, and we will go off the stage. The place that knows us today, then will know us no more forever. You have an appointment with death. Come on, face up to it.

#### DEATH ENDS ALL OUR PLANS

I want to say a few things about death. They are simple things. The first thing I want to say about death is that it ends all our earthly plans. If you are going to fulfill those plans and purposes, you are going to have to do it before you die. When death comes it is the end. Death is not a comma in this sentence of life. It is not a semicolon. It is a full stop. It's the end of the chapter, the end of the book, and the book is closed. If I am going to accomplish certain things I will have to do

that before I die. If I am going to see revival, I have got to see it before I die.

I always tell my people there is one blessing which we will never see in Heaven, and that is revival. If we do not see it down here we have lost the chance of seeing it for evermore. I am so keen to see it, I do not want to go to Heaven and talk to the men of 1859, and say to Jeremy Meneely, "Hullo, Brother Meneely, how are you? I represented Kells and Ferniskey in the Mother of Parliaments. I know the area well." He would say, "Brother Ian, did you ever see revival?" "No." He says "Well let me tell you about it. I will tell you what it was like." We would have missed the blessing forever. I want to be able to say to him, "Well Jeremy, you had a good revival, but we had a better one in 1975. It was far better than yours." I tell you my brothers if you don't see revival before you die you will never see it.

Could I say something else? If the Arab nations, the Arab leaders ever wipe out Israel, they have got to do it before they die. Old Nasser, he thought he was going to do it. He tried it and he failed. He is dead. He is finished. He is gone.

Hitler thought he was going to rule the world. He tried to do it. He is dead now. He has not a chance now. He is in the grave. It is all over.

If we are going to save Ulster for God and Christ, we have got to do it before we die. When we are dead and gone we will have no responsibility. We will have no opportunity then.

## NO MORE WORK AFTER DEATH

Death finishes it all. It is all over. You down tools sir, at the door of eternity. The architect will lay down his pencil. He might have hundreds of plans to draw up, but he wil not draw one after death. The carpenter may have a lot of joinery to do. There is a big lot of wood on the bench to be cut to size and planed, to be made into the things he is manufacturing. When death comes the plane will be stilled, the chisel will be stilled and the hammer will be stilled. He is gone. His job is done. He will not strike another nail after death comes, He will not plane another piece of wood or fasten another job with the glue. The carpenter must quit when death comes.

What about the merchant? Business is booming. Orders to be filed. Orders to be sent out. Jobs to be done. Let death overcome the merchant, and although he never had a more successful time, he will not file another order, he will not sell another yard of cloth after death comes.

The preacher preaches many a sermon. He stands up and opens the Bible. He reads the text, announces to his congregation his subject, and preaches the sermon. After death comes though thousands want to hear him, though hundreds flock to the sanctuary, no man will hear again the living voice of the preacher. He is gone. The job is done. The last sermon is preached. The last appeal for souls is given. The last amen is pronounced. The last benediction and doxology is over. "Only one life, t'will soon be past. Only what's done for Jesus will last."

Death finishes all earthly plans and planning. We have got to do it before we die. That is why we must be busy. We have not got very much time. It will soon be over. When death comes, that is the end of the whole business. It is all over. It is all finished, as far as earthly plans are concerned.

## THE RUIN OF THE BODY

Let me tell you something else about death. It marks our physical ruin. When death comes, the tent comes down.

We had a tent up there on Saturday on the Cullybackey Road, and when I got back up after a meeting the old tent was down. I looked at it on the ground. The poles were down. The pegs were out and the canvas was folded, and I just thought how much like the temple of the body.

Some day God is going to shake the tent poles. Some day the canvas is going to come down. Some day the tent pegs are going to be pulled up. Some day God is going to fold away the tabernacle of the body. It may be a beautiful body but death will take its beauty from it.

"Fairest flowers soon decay,  
Youth and beauty pass away,  
O, you haven't long to stay,  
Be in time."

It may be a strong body. It may be physically strong with muscles of steel and with nerves of iron, but when death comes the body will fall into decay. Nothing can keep that body going on forever. It is marked with death.

When it began to live, it began to die. You are dying every second of the day. You are dying every minute of every hour. You are dying men and women.

Some day this body will be so destroyed by death, that our loved ones, those that love us and long after us will be glad to shut the coffin and bury their dead out of their sight. Dust we are, and unto dust we shall return. There is no beauty in the shroud. There are no fashions in the grave. I tell you all is gone then. Death marks our physical ruin.

Oh, think of it tonight? How will you be sinner when death takes down the body?

I had a great old friend, Dick McWilliams, a great old man of God. He used to sing, "I won't have to cross Jordan alone."

I am glad, as a Christian, when the tent comes down the Lord will be with me.

I was once very near to death. A woman came to our home, and professed to be a converted nun. We brought her in. We spoke to her about the Lord. She stayed in my home. Then one day she disappeared. But she had done her work. She had put poison in the food and I had partaken of the poison. I lay between life and death. I was right down in the valley. I remember seeing my dear wife and the doctor at the end of the bed. I saw them away in the distance. I could not lift my hand out from under the bedclothes. I was as far down in the valley as I will ever be until I cross over. But I had perfect peace. There is peace in the valley of death for the child of God. There is peace in the valley of death for those who believe in the gospel. Glorious peace

in Christ. You will not have to cross Jordan alone if you have Christ.

How will you do, sinner, you who have not got Jesus? When the doctor shakes his head and tells you it is all over. When they draw the curtains. When your loved ones speak with whispers and you know that the great black sergeant of death has come with his summons which you must answer. Tell me, how will you do? No Christ, no hope, no company, no peace, no light. A lost soul waiting for hell. A tragedy, that is what it will be for you. You had better face up to it now.

#### SEVERS ALL ASSOCIATIONS

Then, of course, death ends all earthly associations. All those close knit associations we make in time will be finished at death. The association between a man and his wife, the closest bond which can bind humans together. Death is no respecter of the marriage bonds. It just severs the link.

I have been in the home where someone is dying. I remember going to a home one day and the mother was dying. the wee children were there crying for mammy. Death does not stop because orphans cry. Death went on. As the children wept for a mother who would never return to them, never lift them up again on her knee, never put her gentle hand upon their heads, never give them that sweetest thing in life, a mother's kiss, those wee ones wept and cried and they said, "Mr. Paisley, will mammy never come again?" I had to say, "No, dears, but thank God she is gone to a better land. If you grow up and love Jesus you will meet her some day."

Death does not respect people. I stood in a hospital ward some time ago. There was an infant in the cot and it was going to die. Mammy was at one side of the cot and daddy at the other side of the cot. If a mother's love could have plucked that child from the jaws of death, that mother's love would have plucked that child from the jaws of death. But her prayers, all her tears, all her weeping and all her love did not stop death from taking the child. When the little one had given its last gasp, it lay there lifeless in the cot, mammy wept her eyes out. All I could say was, "Dear, your child is in a better land."

"Growing in the Upper Garden  
Flowers this world too rudely pressed,  
In that land shall reach perfection  
By the Heavenly Gardener blessed.

Though our heart do break with sorrow,  
By the pain too hard to bear,  
They are waiting for our coming,  
To the Upper Garden there.

I tell you, when death comes it is the end. You get your invitation to the lodge meeting now man. You will not get it after you die. You get your card to the dance now. You will not get it after you die. You get the monthly invitation to the club meeting now. You will not get it after you die. Earthly associations are gone. Gone when death comes. The invitations will remain unopened. The invitations will remain unanswered. The invitations will remain unaccepted. When death comes

it cuts all earthly associations. It will all be finished when death comes.

#### THUS ENDS THE DAY OF GRACE

I will tell you one last thing about death. It is the most solemn and tragic thing of all. It is the end of the day of grace as far as you and I are concerned. Hundreds of opportunities to hear the gospel, not one after you die. Thousands of chances to get converted and be born again, not one after you die. Hundreds of Sabbaths to go to God's house, to attend the means of grace, hear the Word of salvation and listen to faithful gospel preaching, not one after you are dead.

I know people who attended my church and they died without Christ. I walked after the coffin with painful steps. I saw a coffin without hope lowered into a grave, without life everlasting. As I stood there I could have preached the gospel. I could have preached it loud and I did, but it was not for the dead. It was for the living. I tell you, the dead were beyond it. No use going to the graveyard and standing over the grave and pleading and saying, "Come to Christ. Repent of your sin. Believe on Jesus." It is too late. Death ends the day of grace. There is not a chance. There is not a hope. There is not one spark of light, as far as gospel grace is concerned, after death.

"He that is filthy, let him be filthy still. He that is unclean, let him be unclean still." As the tree falls, so shall it lie.

Tell me, if you died tonight sinner, where would your soul be? Do not shrug your shoulders and try to get

away from it. Because you could die tonight. You could be in eternity tonight. It is mighty dangerous to reject Christ when the Spirit of God is moving in a meeting. I fear in gospel services when I see people getting saved and other people rejecting Christ. I tremble and fear for them with all my heart, with all my soul and all my mind.

That is death. Have you learned about it tonight? Have you ever thought about it before? It finishes all your earthly plans. It brings to conclusion all your earthly associations. It marks the beginning of physical ruin. It is end of the day of grace.

#### THE TERRIBLE JUDGMENT

Let me say a word now about the judgment. It is a terrible thing death, "But after this the judgment." That is a terrible word, "Judgment." Wrapped up in that word for God's people are all the joys of Heaven, all the songs of the redeemed, all the shoutings of Heaven and all the choirs and music of the land celestial and terrestrial. Judgment. What does that mean? It means for me, judged in Christ and set free for all eternity. That is what it means for me. Why? Because I believe in the Blood of the Lamb. That is why. I have believed to the saving of the soul. Wrapped up in that word for you sinner is hell, darkness, chains, agony, bondage, wrath, torments, anguish, everlasting woe, no hope, no peace, no joy, and no light for evermore. Judgment. "After death, the judgment."

#### OUR RECONSTRUCTION

That judgment day will mark our reconstruction. God is going to reconstruct our body. I am glad I am going to have a body like unto His glorious Body. We are not much to look at down here, but we are going to be real good-looking up there. We are going to be like Jesus. I look forward to that day. But do you know sinner, you are going to have a body re-constructed to endure the torments of the damned?

I believe every drunkard will rise with the pangs and anguish of drink on him, but he will not have a way to satisfy the thirst. I believe, gambler you will rise with the fever of gambling upon you, but there will be no way for you to satisfy that craving. I believe evil, unclean men will rise with every sinful lust they carried about on God's earth, but they will have no way to satisfy their lusts. I believe the appetites of sin will be on the body of the sinner as he rises to everlasting contempt and everlasting judgment on that dark day. You must think about that.

How will you do drunkard, with the thirst on you and no means to slake it? How will you do gambler, with the gambling fever on you and no way to alleviate it? How will you do, unsaved, unclean man with that habit as strong as ever in your body, and not a way whereby you can satisfy it? I tell you that will be a dark day.

But what a day for the people of God! That dear old woman bent double with rheumatics, never knew a moment, in her later life, of peace, of health, of body. Praise God, she will be cured forever then.

Robert Murray McCheyne will be resurrected without a pale cheek. He will rise without the tuberculosis from which he suffered. He will rise perfect for evermore.

David Brainard, the missionary to the Indians, was shot through with consumption and he died in his early youth. Praise God, when he rises that day he will rise with a body everlasting health.

There are medical doctors in Heaven but they are all out of a job. There is no sickness in Heaven. Everybody is well in Heaven. Is that not great? You will lose your rheumatism madam. It will be gone then. No aches or pains in the Glory Land. What a day that will be! Wonderful health, everlasting health in Heaven on the day of judgment.

#### IT WILL ALL BE EXPLAINED THEN

It will be a day of explanation. God is going to explain a few things. There are things I want explained.

I want to know why men of God suffered down here. I want to know why godly men and women had the rough end of the stick down here below. I want to know why truth has so often been in the gutter, and falsehood has so often been on the throne. I want to know that. Praise God, one day He will explain it all. He will give us an explanation. Do you know what the saints of God will do? They will bless the hand that guided, they'll bless the heart that planned, when throned where glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's Land. What a day, what a blessed day of explanation.

God will give out the rewards then. People have lied about us. People have accused us of evil motives. People

have said all manner of evil against us. Praise God, we will be vindicated then. Thank God, truth will out and truth will be vindicated.

I am glad I have fought the old modernists. I am glad I have fought Popery and evil in this land. On the day of judgment I will be able to look Christ in the face and say, "When old Soper came to Ballymena and said you were not Virgin Born, I told him he was a liar. I stood up for you Jesus."

Jesus will stand up for us then. How do I know? He said, "If ye confess Me before men, him will I confess before my Father and the angels in Heaven." What a day that will be, when Jesus will bring us up to the front and say, "You did a good job. You stood up well." God will honour you. He will say, "Well done good and faithful servant."

It will be worth it all, will it not? It will be worth all the fights, will it not? It will be worth all the trouble, and all the criticism and all the abuse we have got, Hallelujah! With extended hands He will greet me, when the saints go marching in. When the saints go marching in, I will be one of that number, when the saints go marching in.

God is going to explain to you sinner why you are going to go to hell. You will see gospel opportunity then in its proper light. You will understand the blessedness of these days of evangelism in the Town Hall. You will realise then what you are not prepared to realise now, Jesus is passing this way, is passing this way today. You will know then that you missed it. Oh how sad and dark you will be then. You will think of this meeting, Ian Paisley preaching, Willie McCrea singing and Jim Beggs

praying, and you will say "I could have been saved that Monday night the 15th September. I could have been born again. If I had taken the step it would have been Heaven for me. I did not take it and now it is hell for evermore." O, how sad that will be.

No wonder some of us weep for you when you don't know it. No wonder some of us break down when we are praying, when we think of looking into the faces of men and women fooled by the devil, and some day to be in hell.

Friend, do not be a fool tonight. Come on, you can be saved tonight. You can start for Heaven in this meeting. You can make sure of Heaven tonight.

#### GOD WILL LOOK US OVER

It is going to be a day of scrutiny. Oh, we are going to be scrutinised then. I am glad it will not be a day of scrutiny for me. I will be hiding in Jesus. When God looks at me He is going to see Jesus. That will be a great day. He will not see any of my sins, they are all gone. He has not only forgiven them, He has forgotten them, past, present and future. Praise God, my sins are gone, gone, gone forever. There is power in the Blood to do that, wonder working power. They are gone forever. God is going to look on Christ and Christ is going to say, "Father, Ian Paisley, he was a dark dirty sinner, but Father I died for him. I shed my Blood for him. I gave my life for him. He is my child." The Lord is going to accept me in His Son. Praise God, I am accepted in the Beloved.

You are going to stand on your own friend. There is going to be a big army of accusers there. The sins of youth will be resurrected. The sins of young manhood and womanhood will be resurrected. The sins of middle age will be resurrected. The sins of old age will be resurrected. The sins of hand, the sins of feet, the sins of eye, the sins of the hearing, the sins of the flesh, the sins of the body, the sins of the mind and the sins of the soul.

I hear the tramp, tramp, tramp, of the great army of your sins, as they march before the judgment bar of God. Every one of them points the finger and cries "Guilty, guilty, guilty." You will try to stop your ears from that cry, but you will not be able to close it out. God will pronounce the sentence.

Have you ever been in court in the old days, when the man was sentenced to death? The chaplain came and gave the judge the black cap. The judge took off his wig and laid it down on the table. He put on the black cap and he mentioned the name of the prisoner and said "You have been tried and found guilty of death. You shall go from this court to a certain prison, and on a certain day and at a certain hour you will be hanged by the neck until your life is no more." And the chaplain said a loud, "Amen."

Some day Jesus will put on the black cap. Some day you will stand to be judged. Christ will say, "Because you have rejected the mercy of God, rejected the Blood which I shed and the redemption that I gave for the salvation of your soul, and because you clung on to sin and refused to repent, your soul and body will go down into the dungeons of hell for evermore." And

angels will say, "Amen." And the saints of God will say, "Amen." And the Father and the Holy Ghost and the Son will say, "Amen." And your soul and body will be lost. My God, lost for evermore.

It was to save you from such a hell that Jesus died. It was to save you from that hell that Jesus bled on the cross. It is to save you from that eternity that God in Christ died in agony. He cried, "I thirst" and "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

Friend, do not go to that hell tonight. Oh, trust Christ, and flee from the wrath to come. Come on sinner look to Jesus tonight.

"Oh, come sinner come,  
Oh why will you delay?  
The striking invitation is  
That you should come today

Tomorrow has no promise  
That it can give to you,  
Tomorrow is eternity  
Just hidden from your view.

O, come, sinner come,  
Accept the proffered grace,  
For death may soon be calling you  
Into her cold embrace.

The harvest will be ended,  
The summer will be passed,  
Your lamentation then will be  
My soul, my soul, my soul is lost, lost lost  
at last."

Do not be a fool friend, hasten to the cross. Hide in Jesus and be saved for evermore.

May God save you from an unready death-bed. May God Almighty save you from a Christless hell. That is the sincere prayer of my heart.

AMEN AND AMEN!

*Psalms of David*

*Proprietary*

SERMON:  
**FOUR BLACK ROMAN  
NONES**

## FOUR BLACK ROMAN NONES

*"There is none righteous"* Rom. 3:10. *"There is none that seeketh after God"* Rom. 3:11. *"There is none that understandeth"* Rom. 3:11. *"There is none that doeth good"* Rom. 3:12.

I want to talk tonight very simply, and I trust with great plainness of speech upon these four black Roman nones.

You know there is a lot of talk today about the nobility of man. There is a wee programme comes on at a quarter to seven in the morning on the Radio, it is called "Lift up your hearts." And my, you get good and bad on it. An odd time you get a man who loves Jesus and you know he does. And it is not very long until you feel a unity with him. He is telling the truth, he is saved by grace and he is washed in the Blood of Christ. And there is something cheers your heart.

I like to get up about half past six or a quarter to seven to get the sleep out of my eyes. And I have a little radio a dear brother gave me, and I set it just on the time and when a quarter to seven comes it just starts "Lift up your hearts." And I lift up my eyes and look around, and rub the sleep from my eyes. And my wife says, "Get that tea, Ian" and as an obedient husband I get up and get her a cup of tea every morning. I have a tea-making machine right beside my bed. I just press a button and the job is done!

I am sure you have heard that programme and they talk about the nobility of man, what a noble thing man is. They talk about the dignity of mankind. How dignified mankind is. They talk about the inherent goodness of men. And they talk about man's quest for the things that are lovely and true. Man's desires to forward the kingdom of God, the universal brotherhood society. Oh, it is a lot of lies. My friend there is not a vestige of truth in it.

Man, because of sin, is half beast and half devil. You say, "Preacher, that is strong language." That is what George Whitfield says. He said "Man that has sin is half beast and half devil. His body is half a beast and his soul is half a devil." That is what sin has done to man.

If you go to a church and the preacher talks about the dignity of man, talks about the purity of mankind, talks about the universal Fatherhood of God and the common brotherhood of men, do not believe a word of it friend. It is not true. It is a lie. Imagine saying those murderers are children of God.

I have been in some of those homes where murder has been committed. I have seen, the other day, the son of one of my members who was shot in his home. I was up in that home. The IRA assassins came and took him for his cousin of the same name who was a sergeant in the RUC and had given evidence at a court case which led to the locking away of some IRA killers. And the IRA was out for that man's life. They mistook this man for him, and they went up to his door those killers, and they said, "Good-day" to a man working in his garden beside his house, and they shot him through the glass

of his front doorway and scattered his brains across the hallway.

You say people that do that are people of God? Do not believe it. They are children of the devil. No lie is of the truth. The devil is a murderer from the beginning, and he abode not in the truth for no lie is of the truth. They are not children of God.

Let me tell you, some time ago big Jim Callaghan came to Ulster. Big Jim Callaghan is a Baptist. He was brought up in evangelical Baptist circles. I did not know that at the time. He invited me to see him. I was asked to see him and I went to see him. I looked him straight in the eye and he said to me, "You know Mr. Paisley, all people in Ulster are children of God, everyone of them." I said, "You are wrong." He said "What do you mean?" I said, "I believe in Jesus Christ. I do not believe in Jim Callaghan. Jesus Christ said 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the works of your father ye will do. He was a liar from the beginning and he abode not in the truth.'" He said "I am not going to argue with you from the Bible." I replied "You brought it up. You bring up anything from the Bible and I am able for you, thank God." He has a sister who is a converted woman. She sent word to a friend of mine who is a Baptist minister in London, she said, "Tell Ian Paisley he really hit him in the sore place." Jim Callaghan professed to be saved and was baptised as a young man. He knew what I was talking about.

I want to tell you friend, that you are not a child of God, men are not dignified, men are not pure, men are not noble. Man in sin is a wretched, God-cursed rebel. And if he dies in rebellion he goes to the place that God

has prepared for the devil and his angels.

Having said that, let me look first of all at the first one. There are four very important truths here. "There is none righteous, no not one."

How is a man righteous? He is righteous when he comes up to God's standard. What is a standard of righteousness? It is not man's righteousness. It is not the church's righteousness, it is not the law, man's laws idea of righteousness. God has a standard of righteousness. How far short do we fall from God's standard today. There is not much righteousness in our lives.

Do you know what the Bible says? "Righteousness exalteth a nation." This nation is going down. There is not much righteousness here. Man, they have got away from God. They laugh at the Bible. They laugh at those that keep the Lord's Day holy. They laugh at the Christian. They laugh at men who stand up for God. See that Prime Minister in Australia, what he said about a Christian politician, he used a filthy expression about that politician because he believed the Bible. Man, I tell you the carnal mind is enmity against God, not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

The Bible says "There is none righteous." You say "That is a sweeping statement." That is what the Bible says. I tell you what, that takes you in, and it takes me in. That takes the best person in, and the worst person in. It takes the educated person in, and the illiterate person in. It takes the religious person in, and it takes the irreligious person in. It takes the drunkard in, and it takes the man that is sober in. It takes the moral man in, and it takes the immoral man in. It takes the pure man in, according to the standards of men, and it takes

in the impure men, by the standards of their fellows. There is no escape from it. You cannot get away from it. There is not a man who can put himself outside the sweep of this man of God's word, "there is none righteous." You have not reached God's standards.

What are the standards of God? You will find them in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, "You will not have any other Gods before Him." No other Gods before Him. How many gods have you put before Him, the Holy God of Heaven? Some of you have put various other things before God. There are men who have put their business before God, put their lusts before God, put their sins before the God of Heaven, put their companions before their God, put their wives, and their families, and their husbands and their friends before God. God says, "Thou shalt not have any other gods before me." What do you put first in your life? Yourself. Your sinful habits. Your enjoyments. Your recreation. Your rest. Your business. Your money. Your home. What is it? Come on, face up to it. There is not a man here can say, "From the day I was born, I never put any other god before the God of Heaven." We are all guilty. There is none righteous.

You can go through them all. You are not only to have no other gods before Him. It is not only the poor benighted Romanists who bow down to false gods. Man, there are many Orangemen who bow down to false gods. Many Apprentice Boys of Derry, and Blackmen and Masonic men who are just as great idolators as those who are caught up in the darkness of Roman Catholicism. Yes, sir! And they put things before God and bow down to them and serve them. God is a jealous God, He

will not have it. He will not let you off with it. It says in the Book, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

I started to preach the gospel when I was sixteen. I am in my fiftieth year. I know I only look like twenty, I cannot help it! I have seen a few things in my day. And I have seen men put things before God and bow down to them and serve them. I have seen God judging them. I have seen God judging even His people who put things before their God.

"There is a sin unto death, I do not say you should pray for it." Who commits that sin friend, the unsaved? Never, friend. You see, a brother can sin a sin unto death. A good Christian? Yes. Well saved? Sure. Indwelt by the Holy Spirit? Yes. Saved everlasting. There is no other salvation. Salvation is all everlasting. No other salvation. Let me tell you this, God's people can sin sins unto death. Listen to His Word, "because many are weak and sickly among you and many sleep." That is the sleep of death. "but if we would judge ourselves we should not be judged, but if we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." If God judges His people with death, because they put other gods before Him, what will He not do with an ungodly man who has not got the Blood on him, has not got the Spirit of God in his heart? He will consign you friend with the blackness of darkness forever.

You say "Preacher, do not talk like that." But that is true. That is what God's Book says.

We could go through them all. You are not to take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain. How many times

have you thought vain thoughts about the Name of God? How many a time have you stifled an oath that you were about to utter? How many a time did you allow that oath to come out through your lips and profane your lips with the blasphemy against the God of Heaven? He will not hold you guiltless. He marked them all down in His Book. Every time you have broken the first commandment, from you were born until this day, God has them written down. He has not forgotten about them. I tell you, God has a record in the unfailing tape in the memory of Almighty God, and every sin is recorded. Every act of violation of God's commandments, keeping holy God's Day. You have turned God's Holy Day into a holiday. Have you said, "Well, I will go to church in the morning and if it's a nice day I will take the kids to the shore. I will not bother going to church in the evening." These are a lot of Christians up to that today are there not? They do not keep holy the Lord's Day. You know God blessed Ulster when the Sabbath was sanctified. We need to return to the sanctification of the Lord's Day. Let me tell you, it is God's Day, it is not the Ballymena Town Council's day. Put your hand to something that does not belong to you and you are a thief. If the Town Council says to you, "I will cast my vote for the desecration of the Lord's Day" they are thieving. They are putting their hand to something that does not belong to them. It is the Lord's Day. And I believe if we got back to keeping holy the Lord's Day, what a different nation we would be. Oh, we need to get back to that. Those were the days when Ulster kept holy God's Day.

These are the commandments of God we are talking

about. I did not make them up. They were not made up by some fundamentalist Bible thumper. It was the Lord that said it. They are right you know. They are not right because they are in the Book, they are right because they are in the very nature of God, they are part of God's laws, from His very being and He sent them from Heaven, wrote them with His own hands on two tables of stone and gave them to Moses. He wrote them Himself, they are the law of God.

You will not commit adultery. This is an adulterous age, is it not? The man that looks after a woman to lust after her, he is an adulterer. That is what Jesus said. Just as much as if he went and lived in immorality with her.

I tell you friend, God's law is a terrible thing. It is a terrible thing to be exposed to God's laws.

You look righteous tonight. Oh, you look well with your Bible in your hand. You were at church on Sunday. You were baptised when you were a child. You have been catechised. You were received into the church. You sing in the choir. You teach in the Sunday School. You are church elders, church committeemen. You are well known with the Christian profession. But I want to tell you man, you are not righteous. God says it, not Ian Paisley, not Jim Beggs, Willie McCrea or Billy Kelly, God says you are not right. You are unrighteous. "There is none righteous." That takes in old Cardinal Conway. "You should not say those things Paisley." But the Bible says there is none righteous. The old Pope too. He is not righteous either. You would think to hear some people talk that he was the next thing to God Almighty. I do not believe that. If you want to know

what I believe about the Pope, read Revelation chapter seventeen and you will hear what God says about him. Yes!

Mr. Spurgeon, that great English preacher, said after he read the second chapter of Thessalonians, "Arrest the Pope on suspicion of being the anti-christ." That is what he said.

Let me tell you something and let me rub it into your heart tonight friend, God says there is nobody righteous.

The Queen on the throne, she is a sinner. Harold Wilson is a sinner (I need not tell you that. Everybody knows he is a sinner) "All have sinned." The Moderator of the General Assembly, he is a sinner. Archbishop Simms, he is a sinner. Ian Paisley is a sinner. Everyone of us. "There is none righteous."

You do not often hear that in the pulpits today. You do not often hear men telling their congregation "There is not one of you righteous in God's sight. Standing in your own shoes you are absolutely soaked in your sins."

I remember Mr. Nicholson saying, "You are so filthy you would put a spot in a bucket of tar." That is pretty dirty is it not?

"There is none righteous." That is to do with the standard of God.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house."

You have coveted that woman's house next door, have you not? Now come on. You coveted her grand piano did you not? Yes! You coveted her hammond organ. You coveted her coloured television set. You did covet it. I know you did. And you know you did. "Thou shalt not covet."

I know two men in Belfast and if one gets a new car, the other gets a better car. And if the other fellow sells his car and gets a better one, the other fellow he gets a better one still. And they are cutting one another's throats. And if one of them sells his house, the other fellow sells his. If he gets a double garage in his new house, the other fellow gets three garages in his house. I was talking to a friend of one of them the other day and I said, "I do not know what they will do when they are going to be buried." Man, if one fellow has a tomb, the other fellow will want twin tombs. Just to beat him at the end of the way. How foolish it is friend. He can only stay in one room at one time. He can only sit in one car at one time. I would not care what sort of car I drove so long as it gets you there.

I had a friend of mine who bought a very expensive car and he said to me, "Any time you are going to a meeting I will take you." I said, "Well, my Ford, it gets me there. I am a Ford man I cannot afford livery, I drive a Ford. My Ford gets me there." "Oh," he said, "I have got a great car, Ian, now you come." I said, "Well, I will test him out." So I rang him up and I said, "Brother, what about your car?" He said, "Oh, I will take you." And I got down the M1 in this grand new car and it stopped. I said, "That is not much of a car." You never saw a fellow more ashamed. That knocked the pride out of him. God has to knock the pride out of us at times, has He not? Yes!

Let me tell you friend, there has been a verse that has been with me all my ministry, and I can say it has burned itself into my soul, "The things that are seen are temporal, the things that are unseen they are eternal.